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WETZEL, THE SCOUT:

OR,

THE CAPTIVES OF THE WILDERNESS.

BY BOYNTON BELKNAP, M. D.

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WETZEL, THE SCOUT;

CHAPTER I.

ON THE OHIO

"Who fired that gun?" demanded Captain Parks, as he turned around and faced his terrified negro, Pompey. "Hang me, if I don't believe it was you, Pompey."

"Heben sabe me, ma sa captain; I wouldn't do such a thing for ten thousand dollars!"

"Let me see your gun."

The trembling African obeyed. It required but a moment for the irascible captain to ascertain that the piece had just been discharged.

"Yes, you black rascal, it was you! Take that!" he added giving his servant a tremendous kick. The latter paid but the least heed to it, and finally added, as if addressing himself.

"Come to think soberly on de matter, I bring to mind I did have de hammer up, so as to be ready for de Injins when dey do come, and jist now I stubbed my toe, and I ticked on de trigger, and I s'pose dat am what made de blasted ting go off so mighty sud'nt like."

"Of course it was, you black rascal! It came within an inch of my head. If anything like that happens again, I'll leave you here in the woods for the Indian's tomahawk."

"Heben sabe me, I'll be careful!"

Captain Parks, a blunt, corpulent middle-aged man, who had served and been wounded in the Revolutionary war, was toilsomely making his way along the banks of the Ohio, near the close of day, followed by his servant, a great fat negro, of about as much use as a common ox would have been. He was endeavoring to reach a certain point,

which had been described to him by the renowned ranger Lew Wetzel, for the purpose of being taken on board a flat-boat on its way down the Ohio. His own family and a number of friends were on board, and after seeing them embark, a goodly number of miles above, he had gone over-land for some distance in order to meet a man on an important business matter. Remaining with him no longer than could be helped, he made all haste toward the rendezvous, which he had just reached at the time we introduce him to the reader.

"Yes, Pompey, here's the spot!" exclaimed Captain Parks, looking around in surprised pleasure. "There's the uprooted tree, with the shrubbery growing around its roots, that Wetzel told me to be on the look-out for."

"Yaas, and dar am de riber dat he said would be dar, too."

"The river, you blockhead? Of course, else how could we meet the flat-boat."

"Dat am so," returned Pompey, thoughtfully, and a moment later he shouted, "Ki yi? dar he comes now."

"You blasted fool, that is a canoe full of Indians! Stoop down, or they'll have our scalps in ten minutes."

The men sank down out of sight, while the canoe that had attracted their attention, made its way swiftly across the river several hundred yards above. Its inmates seemed unaware of their presence, as they advanced straight across the river without swerving to the right or left.

As Captain Parks was anxiously scanning the savages he was certain he saw a white man sitting in the stern, and from appearances he was the guiding spirit of the forces. While scrutinizing him the negro at his elbow again spoke.

"Dar it am dis time, shuah."

He was not mistaken this time. Coming around a bend above, the flat-boat floated slowly and silently forward under the perfect control of the current. When first seen it had the appearance of a large, square box, at either end of which was hung a lengthy oar, which now and then swayed and dipped in the water. The cabin ran the entire length, except at each end there was a small space left suffi-

cient to contain a half dozen men. Above these open spaces the heavy bullet-proof sides rose for five feet. A small narrow window was pierced in the sides, opening and shutting at pleasure, while a trap afforded egress to those within. The spaces at the ends communicated with the cabin by means of another small door, so that the inmates of the boat, whoever they might be, were able to pass and repass without exposing themselves to danger from an ever watchful foe without.

Viewed from the shore, not a sign of life would have been seen at first. Some invisible but skilful hand seemed to dip and sweep the long guiding oars and keep the boat in the channel. But a closer view would have shown a small, dark spot-like appearance above the gunwale at the stern, which at long intervals changed its position, and then for so long a time remained stationary as to give the impression that it was a part of the boat itself. This small object was a coon-skin cap, and it rested upon the head of him who was guiding this boat through the perils that environ it. A nearer approach, and a low hum, as though persons were conversing in the cabin, might have been heard; but no other appearances of life would have been seen upon the outside, except the one individual referred to. He was a man young in years, yet with an expression of face and appearance of dress that showed he had much experience in backwoods life. He was rather dull, of a muscular, massive frame, and had a fine, intelligent expression of countenance. His nose was small and finely formed, his eyes black and glittering, his long black hair fell in curling masses over his shoulders, his mouth was small and expressive, and there was an appearance of compactness about his frame that showed his formidable reserve of strength and activity. He was attired in the usual hunting costume of the day—coon-skin cap, with hunting shirt, leggins and moccasins made of deer skin. A belt passing around the waist was the repository of a couple of savage-looking knives, while a long polished rifle rested against the cabin.

Our two friends on shore waited until the flat-boat was nearly opposite, when Captain Parks arose to his feet and

made a signal with his hat. The eagle eye of Wetzel quickly detected it, and swinging his own cap over his head to signify that all was right, a small sort of canoe was instantly lowered, and propelled by the skilful paddle of the renowned ranger himself, it soon reached the shore, and received the two men on board.

"Dar am a hundred fousan! Ingines!" whispered Pompey in a horrified whisper. "Let's got back to de flat-bat a little sooner dan possible."

Whetzel looked inquiringly at the captain, who made an answer:

"A canoe full, passed just before you came in sight."

"I seen 'em," returned the ranger. "There's a white man with 'em too. I'm a'fraid we'll have trouble from 'em afore long, too."

"Golly hebbin! let's go back home."

"Shut up, you black rascal."

A few minutes later our friends were received on board the flat boat, and most joyfully welcomed by its occupants. It was already getting dark, so that the meeting had not occurred too soon. It singularly happened that both Captain Parks and the flat-boat were delayed several hours in, reaching the appointed spot.

There were a dozen upon the boat beside Whetzel, including the females of Stuart, Kingman and Parks, and several young, enterprising men.

Stuart was a sturdy, middle-aged farmer, who had first proposed this undertaking, and was the leading spirit of the enterprise. He was a corpulent, good-natured man, and was accompanied by his wife, and a meek, blue-eyed daughter of eighteen or twenty years. Kingman was a relative of Stuart's, was of about the same age, and of the same pleasant, social disposition. His only child was a son, just verging into manhood, who had hopefully joined the little expedition. The third mentioned was Parks, our first acquaintance, who was about forty years of age, with a heavy grizz'ly beard and bushy hair, and of so irascible a disposition that he had gained the name of the "Mad Captain."

He ~~was~~ childless, having lost his only son in battle ~~some~~ years before.

The party at the time we introduce them to the notice of the reader, were engaged over their evening meal, and thus the hunter Whetzel was undisturbed by the presence of any of them.

Suddenly, like the flash of a demon's eye, a bright spot of fire flamed from the inky blackness of the western shore, the sharp crack of a rifle burst upon the night air, its sullen echoes rolling far up and down the river. Not a motion or word on the flat-boat betrayed that the sound of a rifle had been heard. Whetzel was standing as usual, resting quietly on the oar, and heard the whizz of the bullet as it skimmed over the boat in front of him. Not the least disconcerted, he neither spoke nor changed his position at the startling sound. A deliberate half-turning of the head and an apparently casual glance at the shore from which the shot had come, were all that betokened his knowledge of the threatened danger. There was little need of cautioning the inmates, as they were well aware of the dangers by which they were surrounded. Around Whetzel stood Kingman and Parks, while at the opposite end were young Kingman and a friend by the name of Russel. The females remained below.

The night was one of those clear, beautiful ones, when the silence is so perfect that the dark forest seems to have a deep, sullen, and almost inaudible roar, and there is soft music in the hum of the myriads of insects in the air. As the moonlight rested upon the youthful, but already bronzed face of the brave Whetzel, it disclosed one of no ordinary intelligence.

There is a magic power in the moonlight, when it rests like a silver veil upon the countenance, softening and mellowing the outlines, until every feature glows with a radiant mildness.

And, when a few moments later, Irene Stuart made her appearance, her face was of surpassing beauty. She was rather below the medium size, of a light delicate frame. As she emerged from below a heavy shawl enveloped her, con-

ceasing her faultless form to the shoulders. There was no covering for the head, and her dark clustering hair gathered loosely behind, fell in a black mass over her shoulders. The moonlight gave to the mild blue eyes a languid softness, and the whiteness of the face seemed increased by the same enchanting veil. The night journey was continued in safety, and the next day the wished-for settlement was reached. Here they were all received with open arms, and were speedily incorporated into the settlement proper.

The men had come for the purpose of carving out new homes for themselves in this great wilderness, and they went to work with the determination to do so. By mutual assistance, cabins for all were soon erected, and a large portion of the forest cleared and put under cultivation.

Matters progressed well until, after the lapse of a few months, rumors reached the settlement of a frightful increase of the outrages upon the part of the savages. The menacing danger to the settlement finally assumed such a form that stockades were erected and the place put in a state of defense.

A month or two passed thus, until the succeeding spring, when Whetzel arrived at the settlement with a call for twenty men to join a company that were going to march into the Indian country for the purpose of teaching them that the whites could not be murdered with impunity.

The crew twenty at once responded to the call. Among these were Mad Captain Parks, Kingman, Stuart, and others who were in the flat boat. Whetzel was to be the leader until they reached the appointed rendezvous, a number of miles up the river, when the whole was to be placed under the command of Col. Sandford, a man who had experienced considerable Indian fighting. The entire force was to number two hundred and fifty, and it was confidently hoped that a summary check would be put to the outrages that were becoming frightfully common along the frontier.

At the appointed time the whole two hundred and fifty gathered at Fort Lafayette (the one of ancient days) and with high hopes they set out for the Indian town of Lush-nee, under the lead of the gallant Colonel Sandford.

To reach this, it was necessary to cross a large stream—a tributary of the Ohio. This was done in safety, and late one night they encamped within a comparatively short distance of the Indian town. A greater number of sentinels were put on duty, and the rest lay down to be ready for the "tug of war" that they confidently counted on for the morrow.

In spite of the extraordinary precautions that were taken the picket line was broken through, and an overwhelming body of Indians poured into the camp. The officers endeavored to rally them; but Colonel Sandford was almost instantly shot, and the panic became complete.

Many of the men performed prodigies of valor. Whetzel raged like a madman; but the men broke, and were scattered like chaff, and were hewn down as they ran.

Finding it was all useless to attempt to stay the tide, Whetzel, Captain Parks and Kingman attempted to save themselves. The two former successfully made their escape in the darkness, but the latter was wounded, and crawled for safety beneath a cluster of bushes. Here he lay all night, while the dreadful carnival went on. He caught sight of the shadowy forms rushing to and fro, heard the continual shrieks of the victims, and now and then the death yell of some ever-venturesome Indian. He expected every moment to be discovered, and to share the fate of his companions.

When the morning finally dawned, the tumult died away, and overpowered by his exhaustion he fell asleep. When he awoke the day was well advanced. As he regained his consciousness he looked about him; but no person was visible. The massacre was finished.

Kingman crawled to a brook near by and quenched his thirst, and then made his way back again, seeing no prospect for him but to lie there and perish, or suffer a death of violence from the hands of the first one who should discover him.

He lay there all day. At nightfall he was startled by the appearance of a little whippet of a dog directly in front of him. Knowing that some one else must be close at hand,

he managed to lure the brute to him, when he cut his throat from ear to ear.

"There," he muttered, as he wiped the blood from his hands, "you can't betray my hiding place. —sh!"

Just then he looked up and saw the renegade Johnson but a few rods away, and apparently looking for something.

CHAPTER II.

POMPEY IN WAR.

'Dis yer gemmen ob color orter for to go to war, dat am sartin. While de rest am sheddin' dar blood round dese parts, it ain't right for him to be idle."

Thus soliloquized Pompey when the forces marched from his village to j in those in invading the Indian country. The reason he gave himself, however, was not the true step that influenced him. Through his thick skull there crept some such logic as this:

"If de best men lebe dis place, den dis place becomes de weakes'. Do Ijins will find dis out, and den what's to sabe us dat stays behind? Whereas and wherefore dem dat goes away will be de safes'. *Darfore*, inasmuch as, de best ting I can do is to go wid 'em. *Darfore*, howsumever, I go."

He hurried along and overtook the party before they had penetrated any great distance in the forest. The leaders were disposed to send him back; but he was so earnest in his entreaties to be allowed to go that they finally consented, and he formed one of the party.

When the attack was made, Pompey broke for cover. His prudent resolvo was to remain out of sight as long as there wa danger, and then to be "in at the death," and claim his share of the glory.

Such being his situation, it was out of his power, as a matter of course, to comprehend at once the disaster that had besallen Colonel Sandford and his command. When he sawn the whites were scattering and seeking individual

safety, and the Indians roaming everywhere in search of victims, he began to suspect that all had not gone as well as he had hoped.

"Garrynation! I begin to tink it's time dis yer black man was tinking of libing."

At the time he gave expression to this thought, Pompey was crouched beneath some thick undergrowth, and glaring out upon the Indians, who seemed to be passing all around and in every direction. Here he remained until broad daylight. He had wit enough to understand that it was now impossible for him to escape discovery. The place in which he lay was the very one which a frightened fugitive would naturally secrete himself, and was therefore the one which the Shawnees would search. It would be certain death to attempt to escape by fleeing. His huge feet and short legs couldn't be compared with those of his enemies. He therefore hit upon the brilliant idea of feigning death until nightfall, when he could make off under cover of darkness.

He had barely made this resolution, when a stalwart Indian walked straight to the bushes, and pulling them aside, peered in. Perhaps the glare of the sun, or the utter darkness of Pompey himself, made the negro invisible for a few moments; for it is certain that some considerable time elapsed ere the savage uttered his all-expressive "Ugh!"

Pompey kept his eyes open until he saw the red-skin glaring down upon him, and then he shut his ears as tightly as if he were expecting to hold a fly beneath each lid. At the same moment he drew in a long breath, stoutly resolved to hold it until the Indian went away. But as second after second passed, his discomfit rapidly became overwhelming. But he held out like a hero, until absolutely human nature could do no more. Suddenly he gave a tremendous puff, somewhat after the fashion of a laboratory steam-engine.

"Gosh hang it! dar! no use tryin'! If I'd kept in any long r I'd busted!"

The Shawnee indulged in a huge grin as he discerned the African stretched out upon the ground, his eyes rolling, and his great white teeth chattering with fear.

"Ugh! come out—me kill."

"Oh, good Mr. Injin, I love you 'most to death. Please don't hurt me! Oh, good Mr. Injin, please don't hurt a feller like me!"

"What do here?"

"Please don't hurt me. I come along, good Mr. Injin jes' to keep de rest from hurtin' you. You can ax any of 'em if I didn't."

What would have been the ultimate result of all this it is impossible to say, but there can be little doubt but that the negro would have been tomahawked had not a peculiar whoop attracted the attention of the Indian. Without further noticing the suppliant he leaped away in the woods, uttering a reply to the signal, and disappeared almost instantly.

Pompey took advantage of this opportunity. He left that part of the neighborhood as fast as he could travel, and continued walking all night.

The whole distance back to the settlement was made alone, without encountering a single human being. A kind Providence watched over the poor fellow's footsteps. The first man he saw was the sentinel of the town, who discharged his gun at him, excusing himself on the plea that he was so dark he thought it was night itself, and fired his gun into it to clean out the barrel.

CHAPTER III.

THE RENEGADE.

The renegade stooped and narrowly examined the marks which his dog had made in searching for the new trail, but as he had been to the spring once or twice, and had gone in many other directions beside the one toward Kingman's retreat, it was impossible to follow up the right one.

It was now getting dark rapidly. Already the shadows of the wood were growing darker each moment, and blending together.

The renegade moved cautiously about, peering at each spot which he judged possible to contain a human being.

"Don't 'pear to find any, though I shouldn't wonder if thar's two, there 'bout. Like to know where Nero is."

He stopped and called again his brute, but, of course, he came not.

"Beats the devil whar that dorg an!" he exclaimed, somewhat nettled. "I'll have to wollop him when he comes home ag'in."

It was now so dark that his form was quite indistinct to Kingman. The latter saw him stand a moment and then said:

"Now, s'pose therer war some feller hid under them bushes, I'd have a fine chance to bring me down, wouldn't he? Thunder! I didn't think of that all the time I've been standin' here."

This sudden discovery appeared considerably to affect him, for he turned on his heel and disappeared in the darkness. Pete Johnson, the renegade, was perhaps as incarnate a monster as Simon Girty; but, added to his crimes, he had a failing which the other great renegade had not. He was cowardly and fearful of his personal safety in battle. Girty, no one will deny, was a brave and daring fighter, and was often

perfectly reckless of danger, while Johnson invariably showed the white feather when in peril.

Darkness had now settled over the forest, and Kingman, having greatly recovered, stealthily emerged from his hiding-place.

"Yes," he muttered, looking toward the spot where he had last seen his enemy; "yes, there was a fellow 'under a bush,' and nothing in the world would have given him a greater pleasure than to have sent a bullet through that black heart of yours. Never mind; you reward will come some day."

And he turned and plunged in the forest.

The spot where the battle recorded had taken place, was in Sciota Valley, but a short distance from the river of the same name, and toward this Kingman bent his steps. He could hear the shouts of the savages, and see their lights flitting through the trees, as they moved about in the village. Some, he knew, were still absent in the forest, searching for prey, and he was yet by no means out of danger, as the river bank would probably be watched the whole night. His wound pained him now more than usual, and he was fearful of a fever renewing itself before morning.

He took the river bank, for by following this he would avoid that singular mistake which persons lost in the wilderness so often make—that of coming, after a long time, back to the precise spot from which they started. The Sciota emptied into the Ohio, and by following its banks he would in time reach the settlement, as Whetzel and the hunters had done some time before.

As he approached the river, the moon was shining upon it, and he could plainly discover the dark line of the opposite shore. He hurried along the bank in the hope of finding some Indian canoe, but was disappointed. As every moment was of value to him, he commenced his homeward march at once. For a mile or so he kept within the wood, until, judging that he had gone far enough to be beyond danger, he took the shore and hastened onward. For a mile or so the beach was composed of a hard, gravelly sand, which made the walking easy and pleasant on such a warm evening.

Right right. Kingman could not help congratulating himself upon his own pleasant lot, when he reflected upon the fate of so many others, despite the severe and troublesome wound he had received.

"Yes," he exclaimed, half aloud, "I'm in a fair way to get home again, and I thank Heaven for it. If I should happen——hello!"

The latter exclamation had good reason for its utterance. In coming around a sharp bend in the river, he had encountered a Shawnee Indian, and the two stood face to face. They were not fifty feet apart, and each appeared equally astonished. As Kingman stood, the moon shone upon his back, so that his features were concealed from his enemy, while the face of the latter was as distinctly visible as at noonday. Kingman saw his large, dark eyes glowing, and his whole countenance working with passion; but suddenly it changed, and losing the hold upon his knife, a grim smile came over his swarthy features as he said in a low tone

"You scarce Long Tom, Peto. He tink you oder man."

Kingman saw in a moment that he had been mistaken for the renegade. His dress was similar, and his stature about the same, so that it could not be wondered at.

Without losing a moment he availed himself of the mistake.

"Wal, I reckon I did scarce you, Tom! Wagh! wagh!" he laughed, imitating as nearly as he remembered the renegade's tones and actions.

"What scarce me for?"

"'Cause you was fool enough to git scared, wagh! But ain't there no more of Injins with you?"

"Long Tom all alone."

"Wal, he won't be long."

"Why tink so?"

"'Cause here's as'll send him whar thar are more. Wal, I will."

"Send Long Tom where?"

"You'll see in a minute. But what made ye come down this way alone, Tom? Ye mought ov met some o' the white men."

"Damme! wish me had."

"What would you do?"

"Me dō so," and the savage made a motion with his hands as though he were scalping a person.

"You've come a good ways lookin' fur him, wagh!"

"Me go furder."

"Thar won't be need of that."

"Why, white dog round here?" eagerly asked the Indian, approaching nearer.

CHAPTER IV.

SURROUNDED BY PERIL.

This conversation, as will probably be seen, was purposely carried on by Kingman in order to throw the savage off his guard. An encounter he saw was unavoidable between them, and Kingman, in his wounded state, was fearful of the consequences to himself unless he employed some such stratagem as this.

He glanced at his rifle and saw he had preserved the priming from loss and moisture.

"I think the woods are full of the whites, Tom. Haven't you seen any?"

"Only dem shoot in battle. Me no find any in woods."

"I seed one hid in a tree. Wal, I reckon I did."

"You kill him?"

"That's a purty question to ax Peto Johnson. Thought you knowed better, Tom, than that. Ef Peto didn't raise thar har booty'ul then sinash me."

"Eh! fix 'em did, Peto? Good!" added the savage approaching still closer.

The two were now within ten yards of each other. Kingman feared a discovery each moment.

"Would you like to shoot a white, Tom?"

"Eh? wouldn't Tom serve him so quick!" replied the savage, again going through the motions of scalping in the air.

"Wal, just look 'cross the river. Don't you think there is something there that looks suspicious?"

The unsuspecting Indian turned and gazed in the direction indicated. At the same moment he heard the click of Kingman's rifle.

As he turned his alarmed gaze around he received the bullet full in the heart, and with a wild yell sprang several feet in the air.

The savage saw at once the treachery which had been practised upon him, and in his death-struggle, as he was, he hurled his tomahawk with tremendous force at Kingman.

So truly was it aimed, that a mere accident may be said to have saved his life.

He had only lowered his musket, and the barrel was still before his breast.

As the weapon whizzed through the air it was driven directly at Kingman's body, but in its passage it encountered the gun-barrel, emitting a stream of sparks at the concussion, and glanced off several yards into the river, and fell with a loud splash.

"There, Long Tom, I didn't want to kill you, but I had no choice. I feel sorry for you," said Kingman, as he saw the savage clutching the sand in his agony.

He avoided looking at him, and rapidly passed on, hoping to get beyond so sickening a sight.

Had the savage been any other than a Shawnee, Kingman would have felt more pity for him; but he well knew that the whole trouble upon the frontiers was owing to this same tribe. In fact, it is a question whether a more villainous tribe of Indians ever existed upon the North American Continent than than the Shawnees. They had figured in many of the blackest tragedies of the "dark and bloody ground," and their very name for a long time was one of the greatest terror to the settlers. There was no compact, however, sacred, no treaty, however pledged, that they hesitated to violate.

When first known, their hunting-grounds were in the everglades of Florida and the adjoining country. Here their warlike, treacherous disposition became at last so unbroken

able to the other tribes that the Choctaws, Cherokees, and most powerful tribes of the South united together and swore eternal destruction to them.

The Shawnees stubbornly maintained their ground for a number of years, until, seeing that nothing but decimation or utter annihilation remained to them, they gathered together and left their hunting-grounds forever.

Journeying northward, they reached the Ohio in time, when they determined to settle. There were broad, waving prairies, and deep, glorious forests, where the deer and buffalo ranged in thousands, and bright, flashing rivers, in which the fish sported in myriads. The Wyandots (as friendly then, when a mighty nation, as now, when the miserable remnant of one) welcomed them, spread the deer-skin for them to sit upon, and smoked the calumet as the token of eternal friendship.

Here the Shawnees grew to be one of the most powerful tribes in the whole North-west, and at the same time their vindictive, blood-thirsty disposition seemed to increase. None were more active in the old French war, and none more difficult to bring into Wayne's treaty, when forty years afterward the war on the frontiers was believed to have been brought to a close.

After the celebrated victory of Mad Anthony, the Shawnees remained peaceful for a dozen years, when they again broke out in the well known war under their renowned Tecumseh. As this is a matter of history, it is not necessary further to refer to it here.

Of course, it is not to be supposed that this long digression passed through the brain of Kingman after slaying the Shawnee before him, for the good reason that one half of the events mentioned had yet taken place. It was now only 1780, and the Shawnees were in the full tide of their strength, and had received no check from the pioneers. Kingman only remembered that the Indian he had slain was a Shawnee—his most mortal enemy.

The moon was now high in the heavens and as he journeyed along the shore, its light was so intense as to render it quite perilous to remain so exposed.

Once or twice the long, low howl of the wolf was heard faintly in the distance, and the shrill, human-like cry of the panther sounded fearfully nigh. The fact that there were others than human enemies in the wood made him hesitate about plunging into it. As he had used his ammunition, he had also thrown his rifle away, so as not to be encumbered with it, and with no weapon but his knife, he was in no condition to run into danger.

But at last the low, gravelly beach terminated. The dark overhanging forest, with its matted undergrowth, reached down to the water's edge, and his path must now lead through to this tangled maze.

As he stood hesitating whether in his present exhausted condition it was best to camp for the night, or to continue his journey, a bright thought struck him. Directly before him lay a small tree, shivered by lightning. It was partly decayed, light and buoyant, and could be easily shoved into the water. This was quickly done, and he once more returned to congratulate himself upon his success. The water was warm and pleasant, and as it was a cool summer night, much warmer than the air. The sapling contained a number of dead branches and knots upon it, and being considerably lighter than Kingman at first supposed, he was able to float upon it with scarcely more than wetting his feet.

Fatigued and exhausted as he was, he found a heavy drowsiness gradually creeping over him. He had had little sound sleep for the past ten nights, and his exertions had been so great, that he felt certain it would be impossible to resist the feeling. So, placing his limbs so securely among the branches as could be done he gave way to the feeling, and prepared for a pleasant night's slumber.

Gliding unresistingly along with the smooth current, with nothing but the gentle, liquid rippling of the river around, and the bright moon overhead, and the sullen, hollow roar of the forest on shore, no one could resist the drowsy goddess. Slowly but surely unconsciousness was creeping over him. Sky, forest and water were mingling in a delightful confusion from which he felt no desire to separate them: and as all things were assuming that blankness

which precedes our passing off into sleep, he was startled and recalled to his senses by a sudden shock. Starting up, he saw that he had struck against the upper end of a small sandy island, and the tree had remained fast. It required but a few moments to free this, and once more he was floating gently with the current. This time he slept, but he was destined to have a startling awaking. His wound made him feverish, and all sorts of fantastic visions were darting through his head. Bears, Indians, renegades, and dying friends, passed continually before him, and finally, after a fitful hour's sleep, he partially awoke. As he lay languidly stretched on the tree, striving to set things right before him a peculiar clickling noise sounded in the water. At first, it seemed a part of his dreams, and he took no further notice of it; but it continued regularly, and was evidently approaching. He waited a few moments, until thoroughly awakened—he raised his head and looked about him. The moon was pouring a flood of light upon the river, so that the slightest object was discernible. As he turned his eye toward shore, he discovered a canoe, propelled by a single man, rapidly bearing down upon him. He looked hurriedly at the person, and was satisfied that it was no other than Pete Johnson the renegade.

"I'd rather see the bear, or the devil, than you," was Kingman's mental ejaculation as he quietly dropped off the tree, and commenced swimming toward the opposite shore. He did not believe the renegade was after him, or had discovered him, but was only crossing the river; and, as he was likely to pass rather uncomfortably close to the tree, he thought it best to get out of his way.

But such was not the case. As he turned his head, he saw that the canoe was pursuing him. Still hoping that the he had not been seen, he came up a dozen feet away, and commenced swimming in an opposite direction. But the canoe was after him, no mistake.

"No use, ole hoss, I've got you this time!" exclaimed he in the boat.

"What do you want of me?" demanded Kingman. "Keep off, or I'll shoot you."

"Wagh! wagh! You will, eh? Blaze away, if *you can*. Come, you might as well knock under and go 'long docile, for there's no airthly help for yer."

As he said this the canoe shot rapidly ahead again, almost upon him.

The latter again dove, and came up directly under the stern of the canoe, where he hoped he would not be discovered. He felt he would rather be shot in the water than fall into the hands of the renegade.

Hearing a movement in the boat, and fearing discovery, he closed his feet together to sink again; but, before his head disappeared beneath he was caught by the hair, and in spite of every resistance he could offer, was pulled into the canoe.

As he was pulled head foremost into the canoe, he fully expected to be brained upon the spot, and more than once his head rang with the expectation of the blow. He lay for a moment on his face, without moving. In his feverish, exhausted condition, what resistance could he offer to the herculean strength of the renegade? His clothes were wet, and clinging to his shivering body, and a more miserable being probably never existed than he was at this moment.

Astonished at the silence of his enemy, he raised his head and looked up. Instantly one of the loudest, heartiest, most ringing laughs he ever heard greeted his ears.

"Wal, Kingman, you're the most doleful-looking rat I ever heard on! Why, who'd you take *me* for? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Why, Abram Moffat, is this you?"

"No, it's me. How are you? Give us you paw for old acquaintance."

Not the renegade, but Kingman's old friend was sitting before him. The very person of all he wished to see.

"Where in the name of creation did you come from?" asked Kingman.

"And where, I may ask, did you start?"

"Why, you known well enough. I was wounded in the battle, and have been trying to reach home."

"Trying to swim all the way?" asked Moffat, with a sly look.

"No, only a part of it. I believe I stand a chance of getting a ride the rest of the way."

"Yes, a slight chance if you behave yourself, and don't jump overboard and try to paddle off."

"No danger of that, for I am about used up now."

"Yes, I can see that you are; let's pull into shore and start a fire."

So saying, Moffat turned the head of the canoe, which had been floating down the current all this time, toward shore, and in a few moments its prow struck the land, and they sprang out. It was now near midnight, and it was high time that Kingman was in other hands. His exposure in the water had hastened his chilling fever, and the strain which his system had undergone now suffered reaction, and his condition was fast becoming critical. In a few moments Moffat had a bright fire burning down in a ravine or hollow, where it could not be easily seen until within a few yards of it. He saw Kingman's condition, and immediately stripped him and gave him a most vigorous rubbing, until he was all aglow with the circulation. He examined his wound, and found that it was not at all dangerous, but needed dressing. This he hastily did, and then wrapping him in his own blanket, he laid him near the fire and maintained watch himself until morning.

Nothing occurred seriously to alarm our two friends through the night. Once or twice Moffat heard the distant bay of the wolf and the piercing scream of the panther, and several times, as he looked up, he could see the very eyeballs of some wild beast glaring through the bushes above him. Then apparently after wondering at the meaning of the unusual scene, they withdrew, and their retreating steps could be heard, while the continued footfalls of other beasts were audible until daylight. But the fire was a life-guard. No denizen of the forest dare cross the blazing ring, no matter how slight it was; and when the faint streaks of morning illuminated the east, the last hopeful loiterer took his departure and disappeared in the wood.

Kingman slept sweetly and heavily—so heavily, in fact, that it was broad day when he opened his eyes and gazed wondering about him.

“How do you feel, George?” asked Moffat.

“Oh!—is that you, Abe? I didn’t know you.”

“How many more times are you going to ask whether I am what I am? But that ain’t answering my question—how do you feel?”

“Like a new man, as I ain,” replied Kingman, springing triumphantly to his feet.

Not a trace of last night’s fever remained. The restless, bloodshot eyes were now calm and sparkling; the red, throbbing face was cool and glowing; and the shivering, exhausted frame was now firm and graceful. Moffat had taken him just at the proper moment, and the fever had been broken and the equilibrium of the system restored.

“Wal, you do feel right, eh? Glad to hear it. Hungry?”

“I’m slightly of that opinion. I feel, just at this moment as though I could eat a Shawnee, tomahawk rifle and all.”

CHAPTER V.

THRILLING ADVENTURES.

Moffat took his departure in quest of game, and soon returned with a wild duck, which he had managed to approach unobserved, and kill with a well-aimed stone, there being too much danger in firing his gun. The bird was speedily cooked and eaten, with the keenest of appetites upon the part of both.

“Now,” said the ranger, “as we ain’t exactly sartin of our neighbors, we’ll seperate fur awhile. I’ll go to the left and you to the right, and we’ll jine again, by that poin’ of bank, which you remember is about a quarter of a mile down the river.”

There was some risk in this, although, with proper prudence, there was no need of either running int’ danger. Abe

cordingly they separated, and each taking the rout designated by the scout, and moving with the stealthy tread of panthers seeking their prey.

They had been separated about fifteen minutes, and each was advancing silently, cautiously and stealthily, when our hero suddenly discovered an Indian in his war paint approaching. As quick as thought the young man "sprang to cover," by darting behind a large oak tree. The tree behind which he was sheltered was, as said, a very large one of the oak species. The protection of the Shawnee was much smaller, and barely served to cover his body; but it was enough, and all he desired.

Kingman stood a moment, as if to decide his course, and then he walked with a stealthy tread about ten feet from the tree, and dropped upon the ground. In doing this, the tree had been kept in a range with the Indian, so as to still screen his body, and his purpose was unsuspected. He now sank flat upon his face, and commenced working himself slowly backward, his eye fixed upon the tree he had just left, and his whole caution exerted not to deviate from the range.

Had the savage once caught a glimpse of his movements, it would have been all up with Kingman. As it was, the Shawnee was half expecting some stratagem or treachery, and never once removed his gaze from the spot where he supposed his victim to be; but so consummately had our hero arranged this that as yet not the remotest suspicion had crossed the mind of the savage. He was, however, doomed to pass a more fearful or leal than he yet dreamed.

The wood being open, and the ground devoid of the thick, tangled undergrowth so common in some other parts, Kingman was compelled to use the most extreme caution that no mismovement was made upon his part. As he proceeded, the friendly angle he made with the tree grew less, and the ground that was safe for him consequently more narrow each moment. More than once he found himself deviating from the line, and almost exposing himself. His progress was very slow and wearisome. The distance necessary to be passed before he could rise to his feet was considerably over a hundred yards, and not half that distance was yet

crossed. When near the center, and moving slowly and painfully along, Kingman was startled by his feet coming in contact with some hard substance. Turning his gaze, he saw a rotten and decayed log lay directly across his path.

This was a new difficulty to be got over, or gone around. But there was no time for hesitation, and waiting but a second, he lifted his feet and commenced pushing himself over. He safely passed over safely, and, feeling considerably relieved, he recommenced his novel retreat. But he had scarcely taken a step, when he heard a sound beside him that made his blood tingle with horror. It was the warning of the rattlesnake! Glancing furtively around, Kingman saw the reptile within six feet of him. His scaly, glittering body lay coiled like a rope, and from the centre of his head, terrible in its beauty, rose some eighteen inches, and was drawn back, ready for the fatal strike. The tail on the outside of the horrid ring was gently swaying, giving forth that deadly rattle, and the whole body seemed alive and excited. Hardly a more terrible spectacle can be conceived than that of the coiled and bristling rattlesnake. The one in question was about five feet in length, and was gathered in a circle of a foot in diameter. The head was drawn back in a glistening arch, like the neck of a swan. As he lay, a patch of the sunlight broke through the tree-tops and rested upon him, making his whole body to glisten with a thousand brilliant variegated colors. His eyes shone with a malignant glitter, like the ray of the star through the dark cloud, and his tongue flashed with lightning-like rapidity round his flat, swaying head. So rapid and incessant were the movements of this, that to Kingman it resembled a tiny stream of bright red blood crossing the neck and head in every direction. Several times the cavernous jaws were distended, and the white fangs, loaded with venom, could be seen curving inward, and as pointed as a needle.

Kingman saw all this in less time than it takes us to describe it. His first movement, upon seeing the reptile so high him, was an involuntary recoil, which had well discovered him to his human enemy. He felt the double danger that now menaced him. The rattlesnake had warned him

once, and in a minute would strike. He could spring to his feet, a *u*, with a little dexterity, avoid him; but, in the place of the sluggish reptile, the swift bullet of the Shawnee could not be avoided. No; Kingman made up his mind that an encounter with the reptile was preferable to one with the vindictive Shawnee.

Favored by the log over which, as will be remembered, he had just passed, and by still being in perfect range with the Indian, Kingman rose upon one knee and grasped his stick with both hands. It was a dangerous movement, and he durst not turn to see whether the savage had noticed it. But it must be done, and he could not remove his gaze from the snake, whose head now rose and drew back several inches, and whose eye glittered with tenfold brightness at his own threatened danger. He now rattled for the last time, and drew his neck back like a bent bow, when the stick of Kingman flashed through the air so rapidly as to be invisible, and struck the reptile just at the junction of the head and neck. Any other snake would have dodged the blow, quick as it was; but this species, besides being sluggish, is easily killed with a slight wound. As it was, the force with which Kingman struck was so great, and the blow so well aimed, that, incredible as it may seem, the head was stricken clean from the body. Kingman heard it snap, and, as the trunk spurted its hot blood on him, saw something spin like a ball through the air, and fall several yards away. A glance showed him the head writhing among the leaves, and the mouth gaping to its utmost extent.

The instant the head of the rattlesnake was severed from his trunk, the body doubled in a knot, and then whirled with lightning-like gyrations in his horrible agony. Fortunately for Kingman it took another direction, and still writhing and twisting, it shot off among the trees.

The greatest immediate danger was now rid of, and Kingman betook himself again to escaping from the Indian. When he fully realized the imminent peril from which he had been delivered, a sort of desperate reaction came over him, and he grew reckless and careless. He turned and made the rest of his retreat on his feet, stooping very low

and moving quite rapidly. He was, however, unobserved, and reached another small ravine, for which he had so earnestly wished. Down this he bounded, and ran for the river.

"It is the opinion of this gentleman that he has gotten into about enough trouble from leaving broad trails for the Shawnees, and he proposes another plan."

With this, our hero stepped into the water and again commenced swimming. He did not strike for the channel, for this would have been certain destruction, but continued close along shore. Heavy branches of trees and bushes overhung the water for fifteen or twenty feet from the shore and afforded an almost impenetrable protection for him. Beneath these he gently swam, and was half carried by the current, catching at the leaves and twigs within his reach.

When Kingman and Moffat separated, as mentioned in our last chapter, the latter concluded that before making his retreat sure, it was best to determine more definitely the whereabouts and intentions of the Shawnees. With this purpose he proceeded farther down the ravine and crossed it in the same place, and a few minutes after Kingman's pursuer did; so that three individuals moved over nearly the same spot, and at nearly the same time, without one suspecting the presence of the other, except in the case of our hero. Kingman reached the opposite side of the ravine, and he reascended it for several hundred yards for the purpose of ascertaining the precise position of the Indian above. This necessarily required some time, and was only partly successful. He approached nigh enough to hear the "u-h!" of a savage in conversation with another, when he deemed it best to make good his retreat.

The fact that the Shawnees were still watching above he considered as evidence that his stratagem to insure the escape of Kingman had been perfectly successful; for, if they suspected anything, they would not still be lying in ambush as they were. With these thoughts, he now made his way toward the river for the last time, trusting to come upon Kingman and the boat. He reached the river at a point

behind the Shawnees, pursuing our hero, so that the two latter were below him on the river. It was singular that the three should be in such proximity and still ignorant of the other's proceedings. The appearance of Moffat upon the ground would have made a material difference in the programme of affairs; but such was not destined to be the case.

Moffat took a careful survey of the river bank, but of course saw nothing either of Kingman or the boat. Not doubting, however, but the latter had made off with it, and was waiting at some point lower down for him, he proceeded onward. Scarcely a hundred feet lower he saw the boat lying under and fastened by one of the overhanging bushes. He was considerably surprised at this, and feared that it augured ill for Kingman. He waded out and examined it. There were no signs of a struggle having taken place, and the oars lay precisely as they did when he left the boat himself. Still, only partially satisfied, he stepped into it, shoved it out clear from the bushes, and commenced rowing down stream. The noise made doing this reached the ears of the Shawnee above, but did not succeed in drawing him from his watch; for, as the reader has probably noticed, he had fixed his heart upon obtaining Kingman's scalp, and was determined that nothing else should draw him from it.

Kingman had rowed several hundred yards as silently as possible, when he was startled by hearing a movement in the bushes. He dropped his oars instantly, seized his rifle, and sank into the bottom of the boat. Fixing his gaze upon the shore, he imagined he could see a dark body half in the bushes and half in the water, struggling as though it wounded. Not daring to fire, he rowed within a short distance, and called out just loud enough to reach it:

"Is that you, Kingman?"

"I am of that opinion. What's the news?"

"I have just found a poor dog, half drowned, in the water."

"Why don't you pick him up, then?"

"Afraid he might swim away, if I should try."

"Try, and see whether he will."

Moffat rowed up to him, and took him in.

"Now pull for the other shore," said Kingman, "for I have had enough of this for the present."

In going across, nothing occurred to alarm them, and our two friends related to each other their experience since they parted. Moffat gave it at his opinion that Kingman had had quite an adventure—something that would do to tell when they got home.

"But where do you suppose that Shawnee of yours is?" asked Moffat.

"I suppose he is watching behind that tree yet," laughed Kingman. "You haven't told me yet how you came by this canoe."

"Oh, there is little to tell of that. When our company dropped their doors with which they were carrying the Injin fort, and I found every man was for himself, and all for no, I thought I'd try a journey on my own hook. So I dug for the woods until I supposed I was clear of the crowd, when I made tracks for the river. Just before I got there, I come 'cross two little Injin boys—little devils out shooting our men and learning to scalp on their own hook; and, would you believe it, the confounded imps had a couple top-knots they had haggled off of some poor fellow's head. They found them half dead, I suppose, and then shot and finished them. They didn't happen to have loaded their guns yet, and the way I walked into their meat-houses was a caution to bears. That split in that rifle stock came from splitting both their heads. I laid 'em out stark and stiff, so that there's no likelihood of their lifting the hair of any more of our boys for a considerable time. Wal, as their guns wan't of any use to me, I let 'em alone, and just took their ammunition, and went on down the river. After going a half mile or so, I stumbled onto this canoe pulled in snug under the bank. As the owner wasn't about to ask permission, I *borrowed* it until I could return it.

"Wal, I spent that day pulling down the river, keeping close under the shore, and watching all-fired close for Injin sign. I didn't see anything worth noticing through the day, and at night I run into shore, turned the canoe over

me, and curled up for a snooze. The air was so warm and there was so many muskетoes, and I felt so kind of all-overish, that I crawled out agin, and squatted on top of the boat. I heard a gun go off, and that started my nerves. I sat watching the river a good long while. The moon was shining so bright that I could see anything as plain as day. Purty soon a tree come floating down, and I thought I seed an Injin's head in it. Thinking as how it might be the one that owned the canoe, who was looking for it, I launched it, and when out, I intended to apologize. The moon shone so bright, that, before I got to him, I seed it was a white man. The rest you know."

By this time our friends had reached the opposite shore. Here, after a short and earnest consultation, they determined to keep the river as long as possible. Accordingly they again shoved into the stream, and continued upon their way.

CHAPTER VI

AT THE SETTLEMENT.

The disastrous termination of the battle of Chillicothe was a severe blow to the settlements along the frontier, and none, perhaps, felt it more than our own village. Defeat was not dreamed of with such ardent troops, and under the leadership of Colonel Sandford, and the experienced Indian-fighter, Whetzel. Instead of giving a check to the savage depredations, this really added an impetus. The Shawnees and several tribes united, and under the harangues of their chiefs and leaders, finally believed that the whites could be still driven from their grounds forever. The great Tecumseh had not arisen yet to seek to stay the inevitable tide of extermination with his masterly genius, but the warriors were as numerous and their intentions as deep-rooted.

Could some such man as Tecumseh have arisen at this time, the Indian wars on the frontier would have been

much more bloody and formidable than they were. Many of the tribes were at variance with each other, and some of the severest battles ever fought upon the "dark and bloody ground" were between the rival tribes. Though all were opposed to the whites, they could not unite against them. Their leaders were too short-sighted, and in spite of their utmost efforts, the tide of emigration still rolled westward.

Long and anxiously was the return of the volunteers looked for. The sentinels at the block houses continually watched every point of the forest and river, and the deep interest felt in the result of this expedition was shown by all. Finally a few days afterward, a couple of stragglers, worn and haggard, emerged from the wood, and entered the settlement. They were immediately surrounded by numbers, eager and anxious, to whom they related the sad particulars of defeat. Several they had seen fall upon the battle-field, but who were shot or wounded they were unable to tell. The retreat had been so disorderly and confused that the two in question had taken to the woods together, and made all possible haste for home.

In the afternoon, Captain Parks, Prentiss, and all of the volunteers, except Pompey, and the killed and our two friends, returned. From them the full particulars of the battle were received. Those who escaped the massacre had made a rapid retreat for Pennsylvania, so that the settlements were again left to their own protection.

"But where are Kingman, Smith, and Mossat? I don't see them among your number," asked the minister, Edwards, of Captain Parks.

"Smith I saw killed. I don't know where Mossat and that madcap, Kingman, are. I saw them both fighting like devils, and suppose if they ain't scalped, they're scouting around the country somewhere. Umph! the all-firedest battle I ever saw fought."

"Very unfortunate—very unfortunate."

"That Whetzel is a trump, and understands what he is about, but the men hadn't a chance."

"The boldness of the Indians will no doubt be increased by their triumph."

"I don't know as their boldness will require much increase, but the way they walked into the retreating soldiers did credit to their cruelty."

"This is a sad thing if Kingman is lost. He was a fine noble hearted, promising young man, and his loss will be deeply felt by all. But, beside his parents, there is one to whom the blow will be terrible."

"Who is that?"

"Irene Stuart. You know her. She came with you."

"Yes; but why should *she* feel it?"

"There is something more than friendship"—

"Umph! I understand. He's *gone in* there. Yes; I understand. But I don't believe he's *gone under*, because his being absent at the same time with Mossat shows pretty certain that they are together, and they do say that that long, spindly-shanked fellow that I once kicked clear of the ground is one of the best Indian fighters in the parts. He can run like a deer, and is as cunning and wide-awake as that Mingo, Logan. No; I think they're in some scrape but he'll bring both out all right."

"I do earnestly pray that he will. Irene asked me to inquire when she heard some of the men had arrived, and I must now go to her. You think, then, there is nothing wrong done, if I encourage her to hope?"

"Of course not. I won't believe he's dead if he don't come back for a month, unless Mossat comes in and says he saw him *go under*."

"If you have nothing to detain you, suppose you go on to the house. The families are very anxious to get the particulars, and I suppose your wife is looking with much concern for your reappearance."

"Umph! not much, I guess; but I'll go down with you, for I happen to be most confoundedly hungry."

CHAPTER VII.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

The result of the battle had one salutary effect upon the settlement: it gave every one a true sense of the danger in which they all stood. Thus far they had relied too much upon the good-heartedness of the Indians. They now saw their mistake, and remedied it before it was too late. Most of the men set to work, and in a short time a double row of firm pickets enclosed the settlement. Although buried deeply and firmly into the earth, of course they were not impregnable; but they were a protection which few settlements on the frontier were willing to do without. They enclosed the settlement in the shape of a square, with a block-house, well manned, at each corner.

A scout, whose principal duty was to skirt along the Ohio and watch the movements of the hostile tribes, came in a short time after the battle and reported that a flat-boat, with some thirty persons on board, bound for this settlement, had been enticed into shore by a white man, not more than a dozen miles up the river, and every one tomahawked!

The scout believed that the renegade was no other than the notorious Pete Johnson, who figured in our account of the battle of Chillicothe. Girty was at the bottom of the affair and had given strict and positive orders that no white man, woman, or child who fell into their hands should be spared!

This scout's present duty was to visit the settlements along the frontier and warn them to make preparations for the worst. The Indians were evidently concentrating to strike some decisive blow against civilization, and woe to the villages whose sentinels slumbered and who were found unprepared!"

There could no longer be any doubt of the intentions of the tribes through the whole territory.

"A war, and a long and bloody one, I fear, is unavoidable," remarked Edwards, in conversation with the scout.

"It must come to that, sooner or later," replied the latter. "and I don't see the need of putting the thing off. Them Injins have got to lose about half their number, and get most eternally lammed before they'll holler 'enough.' I go in for giving them particular fits when we undertake to do it."

"There have been rumors that Colonel Clark is to march against them with his Kentucky Rangers. Do you know whether such is the case?"

"I think he will—since this battle he will be compelled to. I hope the colonel will do it, for he ain't the man to order his men to retreat when they get the upper hand of the red cowards."

"Provided they do get the upper hand," smiled the minister.

"Oh, no danger about that. The colonel understands Indian fighting, and he'll show some of it, too, when he undertakes it."

"Something better than their last colonel, I hope. Umph!—couldn't be any worse," remarked Captain Parks, who had just come.

"Wal, mistakes will sometimes happen," said the scout in extenuation; "and I s'pose that Colonel Sandford's was on of them; but that don't shift the blame, for all that. He made the blunder, and would, like as not, do it again, and consequently he ain't fit to go into Injin ground."

"The Whetzel brothers render great service to the settlement, I understand," observed the minister.

"They are regular teams. If they'll let Lew Whetzel manage matters, there'll be no mistake made; he knows all about Injin ways."

"The Shawnees, I believe, are causing the most trouble?"

"Them imps are at the bottom of the whole trouble we've had. They have always been mean and ugly

enough to do anything, and since Simon Girty has got among them, they're nothing but a set of devils let loose upon earth. It's the fact," added the scout, as he noticed a look of displeasure upon the minister's face. "It's the fact, I say; them Shawnees are the biggest set of villains that ever walked on two legs or four either, for that matter."

"I suppose that this renegade has a great influence over them?"

"A great influence? Well, there?" repeated the scout, gesticulating very emphatically, "There ain't a Injin chief west o' Pennsylvania that can do more with his tribe than he can, and there ain't a single chief among the Shawnees who dare persist in opposing him. No, sir."

"Girty I knew when a boy," said the minister, "and I have prayed many a time for him since. Although a dark and guilty man, he is a brave one, and was led to forswear his race on account of the brutal treatment he received from them. I have often wondered whether it were possible to win him back again."

"Win him back again?" repeated the scout, recoiling a step or two, in perfect amazement. "No, sir; never. A greater monster never breathed, and as long as he lives his whole aim will be to revenge himself upon us; and what is worse, he isn't alone. There's that Pete Johnson, as big a devil, and a bigger coward, and a half dozen others, among the Injins, who are ever setting them on."

"Umph! they'll get paid for it yet."

"But I see the day is well along," remarked the scout, "and I must be on my way to the other settlements."

The ranger, after a few minutes further conversation, left our friends, and departed. The words recorded took place the next day after the battle described in a preceding chapter, and up to this time nothing had been heard of Moffat and Kingman. During the interval Pompey had come in, who of course knew nothing. Their prolonged absence occasioned the most painful apprehension. All but Captain Parks were extremely doubtful of their return and Kingman's parents were compelled to believe that

their promising "George" was lost forever to them. The sad uncertainty of their fate cast a gloom over all the settlement.

But there was one upon whom the blow fell, as the minister remarked, with double weight. The gentle, blue-eyed Irene Stuart and the daring George Kingman had long been plighted—plighted in hearts, but not in words. All had seen and understood the claim which he had upon her, and although there was many an admiring eye cast upon the lithe and graceful form, yet none pretended to dispute his right. All gave way, and pronounced the handsome twain "a fine match."

Irene watched with a straining eye for the form of her beloved to appear among the returned. None other than she who has experienced it can understand the painful doubt, the distressing uncertainty of a heart in such a situation: and when the fatal knowledge, like a blow of death, strikes all at once, then it is that the soul feels its great agony. As the good minister communicated gently, and with an air of hopefulness, the tidings that Mossat and Kingman had not returned, she felt her heart sink within her. The minister noticed her sudden paleness and faintness, and hastened to remark.

"Oh, my child! you must not take it thus. There is good reason to believe that your friend is living, and will yet return."

"Did any one see them fall?" she asked, in a voice so calm that it was frightful.

"Not at all. Gavoon, who was killed, was seen when shot, as were most of the others; but no one noticed our friend."

"Then there is hope!"

"To be sure—to be sure. Mossat is very skillful, they say, in savage ways, and has been delivered from so many dreadful dangers that it can hardly be supposed with reason that he has not escaped from this."

"But why do they remain so long away?"

"Many reasons might detain them of which we know

nothing, child. I have by no means given up hope, and I think it is not wrong for me to encourage you in hoping for the best."

"I will try," she remarked, faintly, as she arose and went to her room, where she might indulge her sorrow in secret.

The good minister had arisen to depart, when Mrs. Stuart hurried into the apartment.

"Ah! how do you do, sister?" he exclaimed, extending his hand.

"Pretty well in body, but wretched in spirit. O dear! few know the horrors and sufferings we nervous women go through for the men's sake."

"What is the trouble now?" he asked, with an air of solicitude.

"What is the trouble, do you ask? Why, isn't these awful times now, with these savage Indians murdering and hacking people. I expect, just as like as not, they'll murder us all in our homes. There's no telling what they won't do in this heathen country. Lord of massy! I should think they had done enough now."

"Ah! my good sister, you must be more hopeful. The Lord will deliver us from our peril. Remember there are strong and willing hearts around you."

"Yes, that's a slight consolation; but then them Injins will do almost anything. Only think how they run off with George Kingman."

"But that is not certain yet, by any means. Many others, including myself, have not given up our hopes of him yet."

"Oh, he's gone, you may be sure of that. I've been up to see Mrs. Kingman. She felt a little propped up, I believe, by what the people had said; but I told her there was no use in hoping, for he'd got into the hands of them heathens, and they hacked him all to pieces."

"And what did she say to that, my good sister?"

"Oh, she burst out a cryin' like, and wrung her hands saying as how she feared so all the time. It's always so;

we women do suffer nearly everything for the unfeeling men. Yes, oh, yes!"

A sort of hysterical sob and whimper followed this, but in a moment she revived again.

"I have one consolation, at any rate—we won't see any of them nasty Indians in heaven, when we get there."

"Don't say that, sister, for I hope and expect to meet a great many there."

CHAPTER VIII.

HOME AGAIN.

The prolonged absence of Kingman and Moffat, to say the least, was certainly singular. Several days had now elapsed since the battle, and if they were in the woods, or had escaped the vengeance of the Shawnees, there could be no reason offered why they had not made their appearance. The most sanguine began to doubt—all despaired save the captain, who, when questioned, replied with more than his usual protervity.

"He'll come if you only wait. Umph! I don't see anything to worry about."

The fifth day wore slowly away without any tidings of the missing ones, and darkness was again gathering over the quiet village. There was an air of subdued repose up on everything. The quiet tree-tops were not swayed by the slightest zephyr, and the broad Ohio glistened like a sheen of silver as it flowed without a ripple beneath the horizontal rays of the setting sun. The dark forms of the sentinels could be seen at the block-houses, and here and there a quiet settler wended his way through the ungainly streets. The few cattle and horses were gathered home, and all were ready for the slow approaching night to close around them.

Irene Stuart stood at the open door of her cabin, as she had every evening since the battle, gazing vacantly out upon the Ohio. The last rays of the sun were shooting

brilliantly over the tree-tops and illuminating them with a golden glow; the hum and noise of work around her had ceased, and the mournful stillness harmonized well with her sad and mournful thoughts. It was easy to tell where they were. It was easy to tell where they had been every night when she had stood thus, lost in communion with them. It is sometimes hard beneath the most convincing proof to believe that one is dead. When gazing upon the form of some cherished one, dressed ready for the grave, a strange doubt will sometimes come over us, that there is still life within him. The most improbable theories will present themselves and have a hearing. Perhaps we imagine that he is only feigning death, and will yet arise and speak before fastened within the coffin; or we may experience a faint, tormenting part of that awful thought of burying one alive, and our tortured imagination conceives of the unutterable horror of his waking within the tomb. Then, again, a hope that there yet is power in medicine subtle enough to win the soul back, sustains us to the brink of the grave. A thousand conflicting theories—perhaps in Divine Providence—prevent us from fully realizing the truth as it is.

Hopes, fears, doubts, constant and intensified, had had continual play with Irene. Sometimes when cold, common sense had its sway, it carried with its overwhelming evidence the conviction that George Kingman was lost forever to her. Then instantly a thousand contingencies would present themselves, and her heart would throb tumultuously with the hope thus awakened. These conflicting feelings had told upon her, even in the short time since they had held alternate region. There was a vacant wandering expression of the eye, a languid listlessness of manner, and an absent unconsciousness to what was passing immediately around her, that showed unmistakably the deep hold these thoughts had upon her. Sometimes she would stand as motionless as death itself, with that expression of the eye as though gazing at the clouds in the horizon miles away. And often when questioned upon some different subject, her reply would relate to the all-

absorbing topic of her mind, she would move like an automaton among the living, scarcely heeding a word or movement of those around.

Her parents pronounced her conduct queer, and trusted she would soon get over it. The good minister frequently visited the house. At such times Irene would be herself again, and would cheer up and converse about whatever was proposed, gradually verging to the one great topic, however, until, at the departure of her friend, she was completely lost again. The worthy man understood fully her case, and used every means he could devise to win her from the fearful control of her feelings.

Irene was standing in an attitude of earnest meditation, as was said, at the door of her cabin. Her parents were absent, so that there was nothing to prevent her relapsing into one of her unconscious spells. This was the reason why she did not notice an unwonted noise in the village -- this was the reason why she did not hear a confusion of voices a short distance away, and the reason why, when a form flitted past her vision, it made no impression upon it ; or more properly, the impression was made upon the retina, and the optic nerves sped the intelligence up to the brain ; but the brain had took much other business on hand, and took no notice of it whatever.

A confused, waving field was Irene Stuart's vision at that time. There was that peculiar, indescribable confusion of forms and colors which one sometimes experience during a mental aberration. All unimaginable figures doubled and disappeared within one another with noiseless celerity ; objects never dreamt of before took form and motion, and her vision finally became a gorgeous mixture of light and darkness, of shadow and sunlight, and of forms and colors.

But amid all these, an object gradually took shape. At first it had the appearance of a long, dark, undulating column, directly in the centre of her field of vision. It swayed gently from side to side, as though agitated by a passing breeze, but the base still maintained its place without motion. Slowly, almost enough to be imperceptible, it

diminished in size, and the airy figures around grew dimmer and more obscure every moment. Once or twice it seemed as though some sound proceeded from the shaft, but Irene heeded it not, although her gaze still remained from a languid unwillingness to remove it, riveted upon the dark object. Suddenly it diminished in size to that of a man, and the first thought that had anything of vigor in it was, that it bore some resemblance to a human form. By a seemingly desperate effort, she roused herself and looked intently at it. It was a human form.

"Why, Irene, how long before you are going to speak to me?"

"Oh, George! is it you? I was thinking so deeply!"

"Thinking? thinking of what?" asked Kingman, approaching and taking one of her hands, and looking searchingly into her rich blue eyes.

"Why, thinking of you," she replied, impulsively.

"Thank Heaven!" he added, in a low tone, as he embraced her fervently, and half carried her within the cabin. For a moment Irene was totally overcome; the great strain which her system had undergone now suffered a reaction, and she was as weak and helpless as a child. There seemed an utter *abandonment* about her which made her a dead weight in Kingman's arms: not a dead weight, either, but a live one, and for that matter our hero felt perfectly willing that it might be thus for any length of time. He brushed the dark curls from her forehead, and kissing it ardently, drew her head down upon his shoulder, where for a few moments the sobs came without restraint. But she shortly recovered herself, and he allowed her to withdraw herself from his arms and seat herself beside him.

"What made you remain so 'on away'?" she asked, with a deep, yearning look which Kingman felt.

"I could not help it."

"Could not help it? Why not? Were you hurt?"

"A little; not much, but so much that we could not travel fast without danger."

"Was Moffat injured?"

"Not in the least ; and had it not been for him, it is doubtful whether you would ever have seen me again."

"Oh, George, you do not know how many times I did think so ! Mother and father and your folks all thought you must have been killed. Captain Parks said you were not, and Mr. Edwards believed you would yet return to us. I prayed that you might, and yet it did not seem that you.—I am so glad !" and she gave one of those soulful glances that it made Kingman blush at his own happiness.

"I thought perhaps you might think rather strange of my absence"—

"Rather *strange*," she interrupted, with a reproving look.

Kingman drew her head over upon his shoulder, and pressed her ardently to him. She sprang to her feet.

"I must look upon you again," she laughed, "for it seems hardly possible that you are really here now. Yes ; I believe it is George Kingman, after all."

"And as I have some doubt of the truth of my eyes, permit not only to look upon you, but to taste you," added Kingman, rising and imprinting a kiss upon her burning cheek.

"There, that will do ! Now tell me where you have been all this time. But does any one else know you have returned ?"

"Does any one else know I have returned ? A fine question to ask when I have been in the village three or four hours."

"That time ? Impossible ! What have you been doing ?"

"Circulating among the neighbors. Moffat and I have been here a long time. I went home and the folks acted crazy. I thought mother *would* go demented. I never knew she thought so much of me before. As luck would have it, Captain Parks was in, and he made a great time."

"Very glad to see you of course ?"

"I suppose so ; he just gave his "umph !" and said he was beginning to respect me. A little while after, Ed-

wards, hearing, I suppose, that I had arrived, came in. He gave me one of the heartiest grips I ever had, and told me that before I stopped to see my parents, I should have knelt down and thanked God for my preservation."

"How like him! What did you answer?"

"I told him I had already done so. He said it gave him pleasure to hear it, and he hoped I would remember the One who never forgot me. Well, after a little talk, he smil'd in that pleasing way of his, and said he was just thinking there was some one else who would like to see me. I asked him who he could mean, of course, not knowing who it was; but he looked so mischievous, I know I blushed and showed that I knew well enough who he meant. So after some more conversation, I left and came here."

"How long ago?"

"A good while, indeed. I came up as silently as possible, intending to give you a surprise. When I came up to the door, I saw you standing in it, and supposed you had seen me, so I laughed, called you by name and approached. You did not reply, and I was frightened to see you look so."

"To see me look how?"

"Why, so much like death. At first I started, and almost believed you were dead—you appeared so white, and your eyes were fixed upon the clouds a way off in the sky. I spoke again, but you made no answer, and I was afraid to approach you. I thought perhaps you were asleep, and in a fit of somnambulism, and waited to see if you moved. By-and-by, you remember, you did, and finally saw me standing before you. What did it mean, Irene? Have you ever been thus before?"

"I suppose so, several times. At any rate, I have been spoken to about it."

"Were you really asleep?"

"I don't know, George, I have been filled with such distressing doubts about you, that it must have caused my singular actions. It seemed I couldn't help it, and I

"I was afraid I would go crazy. Perhaps I have already," she laughed, looking up into his face.

"I am glad and yet very sorry to hear this, Irene," said Kingman, pressing the affectionate girl to him and drawing her head down again upon his shoulder. "I am glad for it shows me unmistakably that my love is returned; and I am sorry because it shows that it may have had a sad effect upon your system. You must get over it now."

"I hope I shall, as the cause is removed."

"Not removed, for it strikes me that he is nearer you this moment than he has been for a number of days."

"Then if the cause is not removed, the cure has been applied, I suppose," smiled Irene.

"Yes, one or twice; another application cannot hurt," added Kingman, applying his lips to the cheek of his fair companion.

"But, George, you have not told me yet the whole particulars of the battle with the Indians, and the terrible suffering you must have undergone. Let me hear it now, will you?"

"Just sit a little closer, then, as I do not wish to talk too loud."

Irene offered no resistance as Kingman drew her close to him, and, twining one arm around her, commenced the recital of his adventures. The night had now come on, and the room was dark, save where the mellow moonlight streamed within the half open door. Not another soul was in the house, save the two lovers. There was a delicious feeling that came over both, as they were together, *alone!* where no curious eyes were gazing upon them, and no inquisitive ears were bent to catch their sacred words. Kingman proceeded, and, in a low tone, related all that has been given to the reader. As he spoke of the fearful escape he had passed through, he could feel the heart of Irene flutter painfully, and she would start involuntarily when he referred to the sudden deliverances from all of them. The hours unnoticed flew by, and still they sat and conversed.

"Did you see father and mother?" asked Irene.

"Yes, they were at home, talking with Edwards."

"It is time they returned, is it not?"

"O, never fear! they will be along after a while."

"But it seems to me it must be late, for see there is scarcely any moonlight upon the floor as there was a while ago."

"Something must be in the way--helloa! there!"

This exclamation came from Kingman as he raised his hat and saw both Mr. and Mrs. Stuart standing in the door.

"Why, how long have you been there?" asked Irene, springing to her feet, and bundling around for the pine knot with which to light the room.

"Not more than a couple of hours," laughed Stuart.

"Gracious alive! what do you suppose will become of you?" indignantly demanded his wife.

"I am sure I have no idea. Why do you ask?"

"Just think what an awful falsehood you told!"

"Pray, what was it, my dear?"

"Why, that we had been standing here over two hours, when you know we just arrived. Only think of it!"

"I told no story, my dear. I said we had not been here over a couple of hours, and I don't think you will pretend to contradict it."

"Well, its a'l the same," snapped Mrs. Stuart, bouncing into the house. Irene, by this time, had succeeded in lighting the pine knot, which threw out an oily, smoky light, making every part of the room, however, perfectly visible. Kingman arose, and after bidding all a good night, stepped forth and made his way toward his home. The sky was clear, and the bright moon rendered objects very distinct at a great distance. He had nearly reached his destination when he encountered Mossat.

"Ah! how's this, Mossat? What keeps you out so late?"

"Something different from what has kept you."

"It is of more importance?"

"I think so, as it concerns the welfare of the settlement."

"Why, what is it, then? Out with it."

"There's something suspicious-like down in this part. I have been up to fort for an hour or two, talking to the boys. It was up at that one. I was talking to Tom O'Daniels, when he pointed his finger down this way, and axed me if I seen anything. I watched pretty closely, and after a while I thought I did. He was going to fire his musket, but concluded it wasn't worth while, as it might scare all the people for nothing. I started down this way, and was coming 'long quiet-like, when I heerd you. So I just rose and come on as though I didn't s'picion anything, and I suppose if there was anything going on I spoilt the sight of it."

These words were spoken in a half whisper, but in such a manner as to give the idea to any one who might see them that it was but a commonplace conversation passing between them.

"Any idea of what it is?" asked Kingman.

"I suppose there have been Injins skulking 'bout the place every night since the battle. The boys say they've seen something going on about this time for two or three nights. They couldn't make a mark big enough to fire at, but the people know it, and don't sleep so sound as they did before. See here, Kingman, we must watch."

"What I was thinking. Where shall we station ourselves?"

"Not a great distance apart, as we may need to help each other. You go a little nearer the upper fort, and I will go down toward the river bank and keep a look-out there. Move careful, for I s'pose you've learned by this time that a Shawnee has sharp ears."

"What signal between us shall call the other?"

"A whistle like the whippowil."

The two parted. Moffat, as he proposed, made his way to the river bank, while Kingman approached the picket at a point further above. The town, it will be remembered, was inclosed by a strong, double row of pickets planted firmly into the ground, and protected at each angle by a compact, bullet-proof block-house. Kingman opened a

out of door or entrance, which could only be opened from the inside, and passed out, so that he was in the space between the two picket rows. Here he lay upon the ground and listened.

He did not expect to hear anything, as he judged if there were Shawnees in the vicinity, they had found out they were suspected, and would not make their appearance again that night. But he had scarcely lain two minutes when he heard that dead thumping, such as is made by several persons walking upon the ground. Placing his ear to the earth, the footsteps were plainly audible. The Indians, as they undoubtedly were, approached the outside picket at the nearest point to Kingman. Here the low mumbling of their voices could be heard, as if in conversation, but no words could be distinguished. A few minutes after, and Kingman heard them at work at one of the pickets. They were fast loosening it, and, fearful that they might make an entrance, he gave the signal for Mossat to approach. The savages instantly paused as if listening, and then made off, just as Mossat entered the door behind Kingman.

"What's the matter?" queried Mossat, eagerly.

Kingman related all that had happened, and the alarm of the savages at hearing his signal.

"What I feared," said the hunter. "These are bad doings. I'll bet my life that this settlement will be attacked by Indians to-morrow night."

CHAPTER IX.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

Kingman and Moffat remained on watch the whole night, but the Shawnees did not again make their appearance. Their was evidently some deep laid plan upon their part, which they were prosecuting with unusual caution. Although there had been suspicion awakened with the settlers, and their most careful and experienced men were deputed as sentiels, yet nothing thus far had been discovered during the day-time to awaken apprehension. Several times before, in the history of this settlement, the first intimation the settlers had of danger was by detecting savages lurking in the woods during the day.

In the morning, after the event alluded to, the men were made aware of the danger which threatened them, and a consultation was held as to what steps should be taken. The general belief was that a large Indian force was scattered through the woods, and were making preparations for an attack. Under these circumstances the advice of the minister, Edwards, was taken; viz:—to dispatch several scouts to ascertain if possible the strength of their enemies, and the probable manner in which they would attempt the assault, and also for each settler to fortify his own house, in case they should get within the enclosure.

Several old Indian fighters, including Moffat, crept carefully into the woods, and reconnoitered for over an hour. The result was what was anticipated. There were unmistakable signs of a large Indian force. In addition to this, Moffat examined the outside row of pickets, and found there were several which had been nearly severed by some keen instrument in the hands of the Indians. No other part of the enclosure had been touched.

Late in the afternoon, a scout from Boonesborough made his appearance, and was admitted. He reported that there was a pretty general uprising among the savages, and Colonel Boone was daily expecting an attack. Kenton was at one of the weaker settlements, as there were alarming signs of war along the whole frontier, and there was no certainty who would suffer first.

As the night slowly settled over the wilderness, the pioneers collected in their homes to spend an hour or so with their families. The evening meal was scantily partaken of, at the close of which all knelt and sent up a fervent supplication for protection by the Great Being above. Then, after a few more words, the females and children retired, and the men rose and sallied forth to the block-houses.

Kingman, after leaving his mother, proceeded to the house of Stuart. Stuart himself was gone, but Irene was there was still watching for him.

"Ah! up yet?" he laughed. "You ought to be abed."

"I have no desire to sleep, and do not intend to, until the danger is over."

"Why, what help do you suppose you can offer?"

"Perhaps none, but when our friends are in such danger, little sleep, it seems, should come to the others."

"I trust we shall escape without much trouble," said Kingman, hopefully. "There may be no attack, after all is said and done."

"Oh, I hope not! There is war all the time. It is dreadful. I pray it may soon end."

"Keep up a good heart, Irene. So, good by, now."

"Good by, dear; may heaven protect you."

He hastily embraced her, and then turned and joined the rest.

The men congregated, as said, in the different block-houses, which were so built as to protect the four sides of the town, while several of their scouts entered the space between the two picket rows to guard against any artifice or stratagem. The Indians were probably aware that the

settlers had made preparations, for they deferred the attack until a late hour.

Although the settlers' families retired to rest, there were few indeed who closed their eyes upon that night. Irene stood in the same spot she had bidden adieu to Kingman, waiting and watching with a beating heart the men as they passed to and fro, or stood motionless at their posts.

The sky was full of tumultuously flying clouds, which obscured the light of the moon, and sometimes threw an inky darkness over the town and forest. Then, again, it would shine out full and clear, and the dark forms of the watchers and scouts could be seen as they passed out from the block-houses and communicated with each other.

Then, as a straggling cloud passed over the face of the moon, its shadows glided noiselessly and swiftly over the village, like a great phantom, shrouding everything in its ghastly light.

Gradually the night wore on. Irene and her mother stood side by side, and when the moonlight streamed down upon the village, they could see that in every cabin door there were others standing the same as themselves.

Not a word was spoken by any one, for there was something in the hour, the occasion, and surrounding circumstances that made every heart silent. Irene had fallen into a sort of half-unconscious, dreamy reverie, when she was startled by hearing her mother exclaim:

"In mercy's name, what is that?"

The cause of Mrs. Stuart's exclamation was what appeared to be a bright stream of fire that shot from the northern block-house and ascended high into the sky. A moment's glance showed it to be a burning arrow cast by their assailants. It arose in a fiery curve, and as it turned and fell described a beautiful arch. Ere it had reached its destination another shot upward, and another, and another, until the air was filled with the hissing, burning missiles. They were flying in every direction, and falling upon the cabins and block-houses. For a mo-

ment Irene was bewildered by the scene, and scarcely comprehended it.

"Oh, we shall be burned alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Stuart.

The daughter saw that one of the burning arrows had struck the cabin within a few feet of her. Here it stuck, while the small twist of flame round the head crackled and snapped in the logs. Without a moment's hesitation, our heroine stepped forward, and seizing the arrow, drew it forth and threw it upon the ground.

"Heaven save us! Ain't you burnt?" asked her mother.

"But slightly; but look, they are falling all around us."

It was true. Everywhere, like serpents of fire, they crossed in the air, while some fell upon the ground, and others buried their keen points in the cabins and block-houses. Little balls of fire were visible in different places, and the air was filling with smoke. As may be supposed, the females were greatly alarmed, and there seemed imminent danger of all the cabins being ablaze in a short time. Women began running to and fro, plucking the arrows and dashing water upon their cabins, while the fiery missiles continued raining down upon them.

"Don't be scart," called out Mossat, as he rushed among them. "Don't be scart; these arrers can't do no harm. The cabins are too green to burn, and the Injins are too green to see it. Jerusalem!"

This last exclamation was caused by one of the flaming missiles dropping so close to his person as to graze his coat or hunting-shirt, and set it on fire. He slipped out of it in a twinkling, and dodged back to the blockhouse as fast as possible. His words had allayed the panic and reassured the females, for he had spoken the truth. The cabins were of such construction that, with one exception, there was the least possible danger of their taking fire, and it was the same with the block-houses and pickets. The wood in them was still green, and full of sap, and the flame borne by the Indian arrows had no effect upon them, except to cause a slight smoke and a great panic.

This the Indians soon learned, and ceased their efforts in this direction. A silence of perhaps a half hour fol-

lowed—the deep, almost audible silence which precedes the bursting of the storm. The savages, up to this point, had given utterance to no yells, and had persisted to a man in remaining invisible, so that not a shot had been exchanged upon either side. Those in the block-houses had done their utmost to catch a glimpse of their assailants, but thus far had not succeeded. When the flying arrows made their appearance, they seemed as if shot from the branches of the trees, and the wood was so dense that a most effectual concealment was given all.

The clearing around the settlement, it will be remembered, extended several hundred feet, so an enemy would be compelled to expose themselves if they made a close attack. As the Shawnees ceased their efforts for a while, every settler loaded his gun, for he well knew that it would be needed in a short time.

“What's the next thing on the programme?” asked Moffat, who was standing beside the minister within the block-house.

“It is hard telling, I guess,” replied Edwards.

“Some trickery that we ain't thinking about, I'll be bound. Them Shawnees won't give up so easy as all that.”

“Moffat—see here, Moffat!” called a man at one of the loop-holes.

“What's the trouble there?”

“Just take a peep through the loop-hole and see whether there is anything to be seen.”

Moffat stepped forward as requested, and took a scrutinizing glance of the clearing in front. His suspicions were aroused, for he gazed several minutes without speaking a word.

“Do you make anything of it?” inquired his friend.

“Shawnees, as sure as thunder!”

“Pass the word to the others there, and blaze away.”

The pioneers were soon aware that the Shawnees were attempting to approach them. As they looked forth, they could see upon the outer edge of the clearing, their forms flat upon the ground, and creeping as stealthily as shad-

ows. At the distance, and among the stumps and logs, it was hard to discover them, and none but a hunter's eye would have done it. Orders were given to withhold the fire until they were much closer, and upon the point of rising for the result.

Steadily, but imperceptibly to the inexperienced eye, the Shawnees approached the settlement. They could not be seen to move, and the way in which Kingman judged of their approach was by comparing the position of one of the dark forms with that of a stationary object. In a short time a relative change of position would be seen which became more perceptible each moment. Edwards, who was one of the leaders, seeing that the savages would turn all their exertions toward scaling the pickets or effecting an entrance through them, dispatched a large number of men from the block-houses to guard the block-houses, so that the guards of the towns was not weak at any point.

Fortune favored the settlers. When the Shawnees were but comparatively a few yards distant, the clouds cleared from the face of the moon, and as the moonlight streamed down once more, the gleaming, expectant, up turned faces of the Indians could be seen. All understood that this was the moment to fire, and simultaneously nearly a hundred rifles in the different block-houses broke upon the air. As many infuriated yells broke forth, and seemingly from the very ground, scores of savages sprang to their feet and rushed toward the pickets. Here the cool and steady conduct of the settlers availed them. It was impossible to scale the guard, or either to burn or batter it down, except by vigorous, prolonged labor.

The Indians set desperately at work, not heeding the murderous fire which was poured upon them. But it soon told too fearfully, for every shot was well aimed; and when a hunter's rifle belched its contents a Shawnee was sure to bite the dust. The block-houses were unrelentless in their fire, and continued to pour their shots in upon the dark, dancing bodies without, who still kept madly at work, howling and yelling like so many demons.

And all this time numbers kept pouring from the woods, until there were several hundred assaulting the settlement. The attack was made from all sides, at the same moment and by equally formidable numbers, so that each block-house had its due share of work. To add to the confusion, the horses and cattle within the enclosure became panic-struck, and their affrighted snorts and bellowing could be heard among the din of conflict. The discharge of the rifles was so continued and regular that it sounded like the firing of a well-drilled army—platoon at a time; and though it could not help telling fearfully upon the Shawnees, it seemed in reality to have no effect.

"Fire quicker, boys, and with a sure aim," commanded Edwards, in a low tone. "The pickets will be down, if they keep on in that way."

"Well, here's a try," said a man beside him, as he placed his rifle through a loop-hole. "I wonder what execution this bullet will do?"

As he fired it, Edwards heard a groan, and turning hastily around, saw the man was dying. An Indian bullet had entered the orifice directly beside the muzzle of his rifle, and flashing along the barrel, had struck him in the face, shattering his forehead and killing him almost instantly.

"Take him out of the way; there's no help for him," commanded Edwards.

Moffat and Captain Parks (who was also a leader upon this occasion,) seized the poor fellow and quickly drew him outside the block-house.

"Umph! his shot had a different effect from what he thought," remarked the captain, as he deposited him on the ground and hastened within again.

The Shawnees, with unusual bravery, maintained their efforts, fired to desperation at the resistance encountered, and seemingly determined to force the pickets at all risks. It was no longer necessary for the hunters to take aim--in fact, it was impossible to miss hitting the Indians, they were everywhere—and Captain Parks finally ordered his

men to load and fire as fast as possible, without taking time to aim.

In the height of the conflict the pickets, which had been weakened the previous night, yielded to the tremendous pressure, and the Shawnees commenced pouring in the breach.

And now came the struggle for life. Once within the village, and its doom would be fixed forever. At sight of the dark forms of the Shawnees struggling through the opening, a perfect fury took possession of the settlers. The good minister, Edwards, understood in an instant the cause of the increased tumult, and with a yell that might and would have done honor to a Shawnee chief, leaped from the block-house, and flew to the defence. His ready, powerful arm was needed, for the exultant savages were pressing almost irresistibly forward.

But the impetuosity of the Indians was their own destruction and defeat. They pressed and struggled so desperately among each other that their actions were cramped and rendered of little avail. The pioneers, fired with fury of desperation, cut and shot and battered and knifed them like so many animals, until, in a short time, the further entrance of the assailants was prevented by the dead bodies of their own comrades blocking up the breach!

The crisis of the battle had now passed. There was no prevailing against the defense of the settlers, and the Shawnees made as disorderly and turbulent a retreat as they had an assault. Without stopping to carry the dead or the wounded, they plunged headlong into the corner of the wood.

The dead bodies of the savages were instantly thrust through the breach, which was closed up and barricaded as firmly as circumstances would allow. This done, Edwards and Captain Parks returned to their block-house, leaving a sufficient number to still guard the pickets, should the assault be repeated. But those skilled in Indian warfare knew that for an hour at least they were safe, as their enemies would spend that time in consulting upon the next step to be taken. The wives and children of the

hardy pioneers, as soon as they saw that hostilities were suspended, hastened forward to see who had fallen in the conflict. The deep sigh of relief which they drew, when Edwards communicated the strange fact that, beside the man shot at the commencement of the skirmish, not one of the number was killed, showed the deep, heartfelt interest they felt for all.

Many of the hunters took the occasion to clean their guns and refresh themselves, while others more cautious, continued their ever vigilant watch. As the moon permitted, they could sometimes distinguish among the prone bodies before them the writhing form of some poor savage in his death agonies, and the glazed stare of the others, stark and stiff, their features distorted and their hands closed with a rigid, deathly clutch upon their body or upon the ground. It was a sad, soul-sickening sight, but a sight which would pale before the horrors that were yet to be enacted along the frontier.

As the night wore on, the Shawnees from time to time fired their random shots from their concealment, but no general demonstration was made. Their repulse had been a most complete and decided one. At intervals a burning arrow whizzed over the pickets and buried itself in the cabins beyond, as if they still had hope of accomplishing the destruction of the settlement, and now and then a venturesome savage crawled as close to the block-house as possible and fired his rifle at the loop-holes alone; but such a daring attempt was pretty sure to cost him his own life, as the flash of his gun would discover him to the watchful hunters, who sent a volley at him.

Then many attempts were made to approach the settlement by stratagem. The inexperienced settler would be struck at seeing a bush upon the outer edge of the clearing, and he would wonder with himself that it never attracted his notice before; after which he would be surprised at seeing it much nearer than at first; and while at a loss to explain the curious circumstance, which no extra rubbing of the eyes could do, he would perhaps be startled by the flash and report from out the very centre of

it, and then immediately the death yell of the assailant as he attempted to make his retreat to safer concealment. Then, again, objects so like logs as to deceive the eye of all but the most suspicious, would make their appearance, and seemingly rolled by invisible hands, continue to approach slowly and surely the settlement, until their sudden change of form showed their true character.

In many cases the Indians did conceal themselves behind the logs which still lay upon the outer edge of the clearing, and by cautiously rolling them forward as they lay extended upon the ground, succeeded in approaching within a few yards of the block-house without the least personal danger to themselves. They would then make several shots over the top of the log and dodge down to avoid. But they accomplished nothing at all, and ran such imminent risk themselves of being shot during their retreat, that these and similar attempts were finally abandoned.

All such artifices were but artifices indeed, which the prisoners had learned long before, and which could not take them by surprise. The Shawnees had learned much from the Mingo Logan, as their attempts of conducting the attack were similar in several cases; but, as we have shown, they met with such poor success that they finally ceased, and for a long time not a shot was exchanged between the two parties. The whites believed that their silence was a ruse to give the impression that they had withdrawn, and thus threw them off their guard. For over an hour, not the slightest sound or movement betrayed the presence of the Shawnees.

Suddenly the combined yell of over a hundred throats rent the air, with such horrid force as to make the blood of every one tingle, and as many bullets rattled against the pickets and block-houses. But the settlers were not thrown off their guard; they cocked their rifles and held them pointed toward the wood. But no Indians made their appearance. This was another stratagem, the meaning of which could hardly be divined, if it had any meaning at all.

Finally the settlers saw with glad hearts that the day was at hand. The east was fast becoming gray and light and there would soon be an opportunity of resting their harrassed and weary frames. Edwards and Captain Parks would not suffer one of the men to withdraw until the sun had risen above the wilderness, and its broad dazzling light showed the perfect day. Then, as nothing could be seen of their vindictive enemies, and it was pretty certain they had returned to a man, the majority of the settlers left the block-houses and their stations for refreshment and rest. It was found that three of the whites had been killed, and some half dozen slightly wounded. During the day the former were buried with appropriate and solemn ceremony. Several were so disfigured and mangled that the white sheet which had been thrown over them was not removed when they were placed within the ground.

It was in the afternoon that most of the settlers gathered in the corner of the settlement which had been set apart for the resting-place of the dead, to witness and participate in the ceremonies. The minister read, in a subdued and feeling voice, a short hymn, which was sung in low and mournful tones, and then all knelt upon the earth, and his clear, rich voice ascended to heaven. As they rose to their feet, he made a few remarks upon the solemn scene, and then the three bodies, one by one, were lowered into separate graves. In a short time they were covered with the sod, and their forms blotted forever from the face of the earth.

The scene in front of the settlement was horrid and soul-sickening in the extreme. The Shawnees during the preceding night had succeeded in removing a number of their dead companions, but over a dozen still remained scattered over the clearing and around the closed breach. In front could be seen three Indians stretched upon the earth, stark and stiff, their hands closed with a deadly clutch around their rifles, and their fixed glazing eyes staring at the blue sky above them. The disfigurement of their faces was rendered more ghastly by war paint daub-

ed upon them. The blood had mixed with this until it was impossible to distinguish them, and, as the wound of each was in the face, some idea may perhaps be formed of their appearance. Others lay doubled and knotted in heaps just as when they died, and a couple were stretched face downward upon a stump, their arms dangling over. The greatest number were stretched before the breach. There they lay in every imaginable position; some as if quietly sleeping and others twisted and bent into inconceivable distortions, and scattered over the clearing were coagulated pools of blood, dark and murky on the hard earth, and bright and glistening on the logs where the sun could reach it.

It was near the middle of the afternoon, when most of the men were engaged in the funeral ceremonies of the dead, and while Kingman and Moffat were keeping watch in the northern block-house, that a curious, yet characteristic circumstance took place. Moffat had seated himself for a time, while Kingman was still gazing intently through one of the loop-holes. The hunter watched him a few moments and then remarked.

“It seems to me, George, that something has taken your eye out there. What is it? Does one of the Shawnee’s top-knots strike your fancy?”

“No; but I tell you, I ain’t satisfied yet by any means that the Injus are out of the wood.”

“What’s up? Seen one? Shouldn’t wonder if there was two or three there; but I’ll bet my life that there ain’t no more.”

“There is something moving in the bushes yonder, certain. Just take a look. It is close to that tree where you shot your first Shawnee.”

Moffat arose and did as requested. He answered in a moment.

“There is somebody there, sure enough, but I can’t make him out.”

“Shall I not fire, and teach him better manners?”

“No. You would only scare the women, and it ain’t

certain by no means that there's an Injin there, and I make it a point never fire at a venture."

"Indian it isn't, sure enough," replied Kingman, excitedly.

As they both looked, they saw a white man dressed in the costume of a hunter step cautiously forth and approach one of the bodies. He stooped and looked at it a moment, and then catching the head in his left hand, jerked out his knife and had the scalp off in a moment. This he repeated until there were several bleeding trophies suspended at the girdle around his waist.

"That is cool," remarked Kingman. "What business has he to do that?"

"Settling some old grudge, perhaps, against the varmint."

"A cowardly way of settling it, at any rate. Why doesn't he take the live savages instead of the dead ones?"

"'Cause there are none to take. He ain't one of the chaps as is *afraid*. No, sir, he'd raise the top-knot of any Shawnee, dead or kicking."

"But this is not the place to commit such barbarities as that, and I'll stop him before any of the others see him."

Kingman applied his mouth to the loop-holes, and shrieked.

"Helloa there! What are you at?"

The backwoodsman raised his eyes and looked up at the block-house, but made no reply. He then stooped, and seizing another Indian committed the same disgusting outrage upon him. His coolness and unconcern touched Kingman, and he called out.

"Did you hear what I said?"

"None your business," retorted the hunter, continuing his operations as before.

"Confound him!" muttered Kingman to Moffat. "I have a great notion to give him a taste of cold lead for his imprudence."

"You try it, and you will never pull another trigger," replied Moffat in his tone of deadly meaning.

"Why, what has got into you so suddenly?"

"Do you know who that man is?"

"I know he is as much savage as any Shawnee I have ever yet seen."

"Wal, sir, that chap is ~~no~~ brother, and if you've got any differences to settle he'll give you the chance, but if you undertake any trick, here's his brother, and there'll be a dead man in your tracks in two minutes and a half."

"I beg your pardon, Abe; I had no idea who the man was. A friend of yours is a friend of mine, no matter who or what he is. Forgive me, will you? Your hand on it?"

With true backwoodsman frankness and good nature, Abe Moffat extended his bony palm, and a genial smile lit up his countenance.

CHAPTER X.

COLONEL CLARK AND HIS RANGERS.

At this moment the subject of their conversation, Tom Moffat, made his appearance at the entrance. Upon seeing that he was a white man, he was admitted at once. He strode in with that independent, careless air so common to his race, paying no attention to the inquisitive looks that were cast upon him.

The first person who met him was Edwards, who had just returned from the funeral ceremonies referred to.

"Why, what brings you here?" he asked, with a smile.

"My legs, I believe. How are you thriving, George?"

"Very well. How does it go with you?"

"Tolerable only. Had quite a scrimmage here, from the look of things."

"Yes; this is bad business—though kind Providence has watched over us thus far. His great name be praised for it."

"How many killed?"

"Three only. This is a severe loss; but it's nothing to that which we were compelled to inflict upon these heathens who so wantonly assail us. It seems that they should learn wisdom by their sad experience."

"Any other of the varmint would, except them Shawnees. They kill and hack so much they're willing to stand it just for the fun."

"It seems that you have been indulging in some of their savage practices," remarked Edwards, in a tone of quiet rebuke, as he glanced at the scalps at the hunter's waist.

"Yas," he returned, looking complacently down at them, "I sometimes indulge. There was such a smart chance of ha'r-lifting that I had to walk into the business."

"It is strange to me that any man professing to be civilized can commit such revolting crimes that these North American Indians alone have the credit for."

"All edycation—all edycation, George. It went kindly against the grain the first time I tried it, but I soon got my hand in; and, sir, there ain't nothing like it. I tell you it's high, George, to serve a Shawnee that way."

"It is horrible, Thomas, and I would that you could be induced to cease it."

"Now, have you ever clipped a red-skin top-knot?"

"Me! Why, of course not!"

"Then you can't tell anything about it, my good friend without experimenting. I and any one else can see what a disgusting"—

"Beg pardon, George, I can't you know."

"Any one else can see what a disgusting practice it is. You have seen it thus. It struck you as such when you first contemplated it, and you admit that it required considerable effort before you could bring yourself to it."

"Wal, now, George, it lays all in edyeation. You know what imps these Shawnees are; and where they have done as them have, I can't see the harm of serving them in the same way—can't see the difference to save my life."

"It's no use talking with you, I see, Thomas. I am sorry that you are so wedded to the practice; but it will make no difference in my respect for you. We are old friends, remember, and I am glad to see you any time. Pardon me for keeping you talking so long, when I should have asked you to rest and refresh yourself."

"Thank you, George, I don't need rest. 'Cause why? I ain't tired. And as for refreshments, I don't know much about them."

"Wel, then, consider this your home as long as you are willing to remain with us, which I trust will not be a very brief period. Do you bring any news?"

"I have a little, which I'll give you arter a while"

"Good or bad—I suppose I may inquire?"

"Wal, it's good; so you needn't worry about it."

"In that case I shall not, for we have had enough gloomy tidings and doings of late."

"I believe I've got a brother somewhere 'bout these parts, or used to have," remarked the hunter, gazing searchingly about him.

"He is in the block-house, I believe, standing watch. I will call him, or you can visit him there, as you choose."

"What is he standing watch for? Shawnees?"

"For enemies, which are certainly thick enough around us."

"You kin call him, then, for he's watching for what ain't about. I took a tramp around the settlement afore I came in, and things is all right."

"Have our enemies indeed retreated?" inquired a spectator.

"There isn't a shadow of one of 'em for five miles around, except the dead ones."

"Thank Heaven for that, for we have had enough of this awful business to last a lifetime. May I ask, friend, the appearance things bear along the frontier? You are a scout, I take it, and are able to give us information."

"Things look dubious, I must say," replied the back-woodsman, looking down to the ground and shaking his head.

"Any fresh outrages of which we have not heard?"

"Not that I knows on, being I don't know what you've heard; but I can tell you the varmint, especially these thundering Shawnees, are at it all the time. They are at Boonesborough half the time trying to come some of their tricks over the colonel, and we boys as are ranging the woods up and down the 'Hio sees tall times—wal we do. It's hard fur the settlements and wimmen folks, but fur us scouts and rangers it's big fun."

"What is the probability of general war?"

"It must come sooner or later—there's no helping it."

"Why are you so certain, my friend?"

"Cause I can see things as they is. If Bowman had given them a regular lambasting when he tried it, you wouldn't have seen the trouble you have—no, sir!"

"I have no doubt of it. That unfortunate campaign has given the Indians a poorer opinion of our strength and powers and a much better one of their own."

"Just so—exactly. If them Shawnees could get all the other to jine in like, they wou'd feel able to sweep us clean from the airth; and I ain't certain but what they'd be able to do it afore we got help from the East. But there's the rub, you see, some of these tribes hate each other as much they do us; and being as they all hate us, each one is trying to finish the job without the help of the other."

"I see no help, either, except in a war of extermination. It would be a dreadful thing to carry the struggle to the knife, but I see no other alternative. They have rejected all our offers of friendship, and are determined to exterminate us, and the safety of us and ours absolutely requires that the war should be carried into their own country, though for that matter they claim, I suppose, that it is already within their own country."

"That's the doctrine I've been argyfying for a long time and I think they'll soon see it's got to be done. But it 'pears to me that George is gone a long time for that brother of mine. Hello! here they come. How d'ye do, Abe?"

"How are you, Tom?"

The brothers met, and the others feeling the indelicacy of remaining, withdrew and left them alone. A conversation, which it is not necessary we shall record, passed between them.

Tom Mossat was older than his brother by six or seven years, and was one of those scouts or rangers whose business it was to skirt along the Ohio between the settlements, and to ascertain the doings and intentions of the hostile tribes and to warn the whites when danger threatened them. The services of such men were invaluable. There was hardly a movement of the Shawnees which they did not discover and communicate, and to their timely warning, in more than one instance, was the salvation of hundreds owing.

The information which the scout imparted upon this

occasion was that Colonel Clark had determined, with his Kentucky Rangers, to march against the Indians at Chillicothe, and to bring them to battle. A summary chastisement was imperatively demanded, and our settlement willingly volunteered to assist their gallant friends in the expedition.

Colonel Clark, a few weeks subsequent to these events, called together his Kentucky Rangers, as they were termed, for marching against the Indian settlements at Chillicothe. Tom Moffat, the scout, conducted his brother, Kingman, and half a dozen others, through the wilderness to join them, as our settlement had already gained quite a fame for its readiness in assisting such expeditions.

This was in the summer of 1780. The Rangers collected together, and headed by Colonel Clark, a gallant and inexperienced Indian fighter, they reached the Indian town a day later; but the Shawnee runners had apprized their nation of the force marching against them, and when the villages were reached not even a squaw or papoose was visible. This was a surprise to the whites, as they fully expected to meet the combined warriors and have a bloody battle; nevertheless, they determined that the cowardly Indians should not escape them.

Their scouts were first dispatched to reconnoitre the forest, to prevent falling into ambush. They reported that not a savage was in sight, and it was evident they were thoroughly intimidated, and had retreated to a safe distance. Colonel Clark then gave the order to burn the Indian villages and destroy their corn-fields.

In a few moments the flames from the different lodges burst forth and communicated to the others. They were made of light, combustible material, and in an incredible short space of time the whole village was one mass of roaring, crackling flame. The smoke ascended far over the tree tops and gathered and formed a dark, heavy cloud, which settled in the horizon. These evidences of conflagration were witnessed by more than one Shawnee from his hiding-place, and he trembled, for he knew what a justly-

excited people was revenging its wrongs. Not an Indian made his appearance while the rangers were at work.

When the last cabin had burned to the ground, the whites entered the corn-fields. A half hour later not a stalk of corn was standing! Everything was destroyed upon which it was possible to lay their hands. Colonel Clark then gave orders to remain upon the ground until the afternoon, hoping that the Shawnees would still give battle. But it was useless; they had apparently lost the bravery for which they had become so distinguished, for they carefully avoided showing themselves.

Finally the rangers set out on their return homeward, burning and destroying everything along the way. While retreating, a few of the infuriated Shawnees followed them and managed to pick off several of their number from their hiding-places in the tree tops and ledges. An attempt was made to draw them into ambush, which came uncomfortably nigh succeeding. So effectually was it arranged that the most cunning and experienced scouts did not discover it until almost upon it.

During the wars on the frontier, it was the invariable custom of the white forces in marching through the forest to keep their scouts constantly ranging the country for the double purpose of being warned of all ambuscades and to gain a knowledge of the enemy's movements. These scouts were often the salvation of the whites, and a few years later, when the great generals marched with their forces against the arrayed tribes of the West, they were enrolled and recognized as an indispensable part of the army. The brilliant and wonderful exploits of such men as Captain W. Wells, M'Arthur, Davis, M'Cleland, Beason, Williams, O'Bannon, M'Donald and others are found recorded in the history of our country.

Several skirmishes took place during the homeward march, and the rangers were constantly harassed by the Indian scouts following and lurking in the rear. Several hand-to-hand struggles took place between the whites and these scouts, and it was not until they were all within sight of their destination that the pests disappeared and

our friends were allowed to proceed unmolested up in their way.

This chastisement of the Shawnees was most effectual and summary. Their depredations and outrages up to this point had increased frightfully, and scarce a day passed in which the report of a murder or a massacre did not reach the different settlements. The power of the settlers, through the blunder of Colonel Bowman, had been greatly underrated and scorned, and there were many chiefs who really believed that a vigorous, determined movement by the Shawnees alone would be sufficient to overwhelm every settlement along the Ohio river. But the expedition just returned had convinced them of their fatal mistake. They saw what a comparatively small force could do against all of their numbers, and they had sense enough to understand that nothing short of general combination of the rival tribes of the "dark and bloody ground" could offer any check to the approaching tide of civilization.

It was now the autumn of 1780. The great revolutionary struggle of the colonies was nearly terminated, and many were turning their attention toward the millions of acres of rich land beyond the Ohio. The advent of a foreign army had impoverished the country, and many homestead had been razed to the earth and its wealth swept away for ever. Several new settlements had been implanted upon the river above, and the old ones, in spite of the disastrous circumstances by which they were surrounded, had continued to thrive and increase. It sometimes seems, when emigration commences to a new country like the West, at this time, that the settlers are without will of their own, but fulfilling destiny, for no combination of opposition, dangers and perils can check them. Rumors constantly reached the East of the horrid barbarities perpetrated, and of the numerous flat-boats that were decoyed into shore and their inmates slaughtered; and yet there was hardly a week in which some boat, freighted with its weak and defenseless load, did not launch upon the Ohio and turn their prow fearlessly forward.

Some of these were victims to the cruelty of the renegades and savages, but their places were filled by others as hopeful and eager as they had been.

And amid all these formidable circumstances there were meek and good men who hesitated not to brave all for the pleasure of their good Master. The Moravian missionaries had penetrated the wilderness, and the seed sown by them was already bearing good fruit. Numbers of Indians were converted to Christ, and withstood all the temptations of the chase and battle-field. They remained together and engaged in agriculture, and withdrew entirely from their rude and warlike brethren. It was a beautiful and instructive sight—the one small spot radiant with the smile of Heaven amid the mighty wilderness, made doubly dark and gloomy by the hand of man.

The faithful energetic followers of Wesley were already numbered among the pioneers. They were brave, resolute men, who could shoulder the rifle and lead to battle, swing the glittering ax in the forest, or point the way to heaven. Theirs was the religion for the time. Freed from the restraints and conventionalities of civilized life, it was from the heart. Its representatives were men whose words were plain to the uneducated backwoodsman, and who never set forth truth beyond their comprehension.

For a time after the expedition of Colonel Clark comparative peace reigned along the frontier. A number of flat-boats descended the river, and reported that they had not been disturbed during the passage. This made the settlers hopeful, and many began to believe war over. Numbers engaged in felling the trees around their settlements, and extending their boundaries; strong commodious cabins made their appearance; and some, more venturesome than their tired neighbors, erected their dwellings in the edge of the wood, beyond the immediate protection of the block-house, and here they removed with their families. Emigration received an impetus which otherwise would have required years.

But matters could not remain thus. The warlike dis-

position of the powerful Shawnees could brook restraint for a long time.

In the summer of 1781, reports reached the settlements that a boat had been stopped near the mouth of the Sciota and all its inmates—nearly a score—had been massacred. The notorious Pete Johnson and Simon Girty figured in this outrage. They made several attempts to decoy them to shore, but the white had been warned, and would have escaped had they possessed any knowledge of the channel of the river; but unfortunately they ran ashore during the night, and before they could escape, the savages, headed by Girty, poured a volley into them, which killed or rendered helpless all on deck, and then rushed upon the boat.

The women were outraged and tomahawked, Pete Johnson leading in the latter barbarity; and, as if to incite the settlers along the river, the flat-boat was carefully preserved from injury, and with several of the mangled corpses upon it set afloat.

It glided some twenty or thirty miles when it struck the shore and grounded.

One of the rangers, passing down the river, discovered it, and suspecting foul play, waded out and climbed into it.

As he passed over the gunwale he was nearly overcome with the horrid stench of the putrefying bodies. Nothing daunted, he plunged resolutely into the cabin, where the full horrors burst up his vision. Stretched out at full length lay some eight or nine women and men, bloated and bloody, piled upon each other, and glued together in their own blackened blood.

He waded to the shore, broke off several dried branches, and piled them at the cabin door. It was now nearly dark, and he set fire to them and pushed the boat into the stream. At last the hull, burnt to a charred cinder, dipped beneath the water and disappeared from view.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE INDIAN.

The report of the outrage on the flat-boat, we say, reached our settlement, but it was discredited by many, among whom, of course, was Captain Parks. And even when the ranger himself related to the astonished people what he had witnessed and done, the irascible captain told him he had imagined it all. He held such faith in the chastisement given by Colonel Clark, that there was but one argument which could make him believe the savages had really commenced their outrages again. That argument, in its most convincing form, he was to receive.

As is generally the case, the long pre-emption from attack gave to the pioneers an undue sense of security, and many of them more than once culpably exposed themselves to danger. No warning or remonstrances could induce some from plunging into the forest and erecting their cabins more than a rifle-shot from the block-houses. The restless, eager enterprise, so peculiar to the American people, manifested itself in every proceeding.

In those days nearly every species of game abounded in the wood: the bear, buffalo, deer, panther, elk, coon, wolf, and the numberless smaller animals. These, with the myriads of delicious fish, showed the goodly inheritance of the pioneer.

One morning, in the late summer, Captain Parks shouldered his rifle and plunged into the wood, determined to spend the day in the hunt. The minister, Edwards, ventured to caution him, but he only received an impatient "Umph!" for his good intentions. He would neither permit any one to accompany him, and evinced considerable temper when it was ventured upon the ground of safety. He turned his footsteps toward the Licking river, and his object was to bring down several deers. In a short time

he reached a celebrated deer lick, and bringing his dog to him, concealed himself in the bushes.

Lying thus, with his gaze turned up the lick, he saw nothing behind him until his dog uttered a low growl of alarm. Turning around, instead of an animal, he saw nothing less than a Shawnee Indian following his trail!

But at this unlucky moment the dog gave a bark and sprang to his feet. The Indian, at the first alarm, sprung backward, and stood on the defensive, and the captain seeing that he was discovered, arose and approached him, while each held his rifle ready to fire at the first demonstration of the other. But neither fired, as they both recognized each other.

The savage had often been in the settlement, and was generally known to the whites as a drunken, worthless sot. Some suspected him of treachery, although he had never been detected in any overt act, and professed friendship to them. But he had the appearance of a low, cunning fellow, and was carefully shunned by the most cautious. He had been christened Bill by the settlers, and it had been remarked that for the last few months he had not been noticed in the vicinity of the settlement.

"Why, how see you, Bill?" asked the captain, extending his hand.

"Me good. 'How captain?'"

"All right. Hunting, I see?'"

"Yeb; me huntin' for dam deer."

"Wal, did you get on their track?'"

"Perty nigh track o' sunken?'"

"Track of what?" demanded the captain, in a towering passion.

"Me don't know; tink him dam Mingo," eagerly replied the savage.

"Umph! our tracks looks a good deal alike."

"Yeh! much like," repeated the Indian.

"If I's sure you were following me, Bill, I'd shoot you in a minute."

The small restless eye of the Shawnee fairly snapped with electric blackness for an instant as he gazed at tho

captain; but the latter returned his look with his own glittering orbs and awed him at once.

"I hardly think you would try such a thing, because I always treated you gentlemanlike; kicking you out the house when you gave me any of your jaw, an' licking you like blazes when you insulted the woman. And you chaps got such a whipping from our boys that I hardly believe you will try any of your tricks very soon again."

"Shawnees do nothing; much 'fraid."

"S'pose so. Come, Bill, be honest. Did the Shawnees stop a flat-boat up the river and butcher all hands?"

"No; big lie; nebber do such thing."

"Well, I don't believe they did. Where's Simon Girty and that devil, Pete Johnson? Raising the devil among your people?"

"Girty am so (imitating the action of scalping) and Johnson gone back with own folks."

"You don't say?" asked the captain, swallowing the falsehood.

"Yeh; me help to do it to Girty."

"Umph! that's one good thing you have done in your life. How came them to scalp Simon Girty?"

"Him want to kill all whites: he do too much."

"I haven't seen you around the settlement since you went off so drunk. Thought maybe you were gone."

"Bill go live with squaw and take care of 'em."

"Oh, married, I see. Well, that's all right, I s'pose—but I started out on a deer hunt, and I am of the opinion that it's few deer we shall see if we stand here talking."

"Very good; Bill shoot deer, too."

Captain Parks returned to his hiding place, and the Indian followed, and passed beyond and concealed himself behind him. The Shawnee held his rifle toward the captain, and continually raised his head as though he expected the approach of some animal; but the captain soon became convinced that these glances were bestowed upon himself. They remained in this position for an hour. At the expiration of that time the captain arose and express-

ed his determination of going home. The savage arose also, and they started together.

When within a few miles of home, they reached a large brook, in which were thrown several stones, to assist in crossing over. Without hesitation, our friend stepped on these and commenced passing. As he reached the opposite shore, he turned suddenly around to see the savage. This movement saved his life, for at that instant the savage raised his rifle and fired. The bullet shattered the powder-horn at the captain's waist, and before he could recover, the Indian uttered a yell of defiance and disappeared in the forest.

"After him, dog, and tear him to pieces!" he exclaimed, furiously.

The dog plunged into the forest with a howl, and took his trail with the quickness of lightning. Suddenly the yelps of the dog ceased, and before he had taken a dozen steps, the moaning, bleeding form of his dog appeared. He dropped with a whine at the captain's feet. The poor brute was dead, and Captain Parks was convinced that the Shawnees were pretty well rid of their friendly feeling toward the settlers.

CHAPTER XII.

It is one of those pleasant summer days, a few months after the occurrence of the events recorded in our last chapter, that we take a glance at the settlement which figures so conspicuously in our narrative, and which latterly had enjoyed comparative quiet.

Captain Parks, on his return from the adventure related in our last chapter, had given his opinion that the whole Shawnee tribe, and Bill especially, were a set of unmitigated scoundrels, and that it would never do to repose the least confidence in them.

Late in the evening of the beautiful summer's day of which we speak, Kingman and Irene passed through the

block-house and arm-in-arm made their way slowly toward the river.

The girlish beauty of Irene had ripened into all the fascinating charms of womanhood. There was a deeper blueness in her mild, affectionate eye, though it could still sparkle with its wonted fire, and a meeker, more subdued expression of the countenance.

"What a magnificent night," remarked Kingman.

"Too beautiful to sleep," returned Irene.

"For what, then, is it made?"

"For meditation and devotion."

"And love!" added Kingman, pressing the girl impulsively to him. "It is now three years since I first asked you to be my bonny wife, Irene. You did not refuse me, but thought you were too young, and I waited another year before I asked you. You made the same answer the second time, and I have now waited two long years without making the slightest reference to it. We are both older, and I trust I am wiser now. Irene, will you be my wife?"

"I guess I am too old now."

Kingman looked down into the face resting upon his shoulder, for he did not know the meaning of the words—but it was not dark enough to conceal the roguish twinkle of her eyes.

"Don't you think I am getting too old?" she asked, reaching up and brushing the hair from his forehead.

"Well, you are rather old, that's a fact—older than I ever knew you to be before—'but better late than never,' you know."

"Then it matters little how late it is—so suppose we wait a few years longer yet."

"An unsupposable case, my dear."

"But not an impossible one."

"I hope so. My gracious! I have waited three years already."

"But we will be wiser and older then."

"We will be older, I suppose, but little wiser."

"And wiser, too, I am sure. We can try it and see, ~~at~~ all events."

"Irene, will you not promise me now?" asked Kingman, in an earnest tone.

"Perhaps so. Ask and see."

"Well, then, will you be my wife?"

"Yes."

"Within a year?"

"Yes."

"Within six months?"

"Yes."

"Within three months?"

"No, sir."

"When will you, Irene?"

"Next spring."

"In February?"

"February is not in the spring; no, sir, not then."

"Do name the time; I suppose it will be the last day of the season."

"No, George. I will become your wife on the first of May—in the month of roses and flowers."

Kingman drew the trembling girl closer to him, and pressed a pure kiss on her burning cheek. They sat and conversed far into the night, their voices just loud enough to reach only the ears for which they were intended.

"Should we not return?" at length asked Irene.

"I see no need of hurrying. Why do you ask?"

"It is somewhat late; and, besides," she added, in a lower tone, "I believe I have heard something wrong."

"Not frightened, Irene, are you?"

"Yes: for I fear we are in danger."

"In danger from whom, I should like to know."

"From Indians and wild animals."

"From Indians! do you suppose there could be found a savage, Irene, who would harm a hair of your head?"

Kingman had hardly ceased speaking when he heard a rustling, and started to his feet. He reached forward to his rifle, which he had leaned against a tree not three feet away. It was gone!

"By heavens! we are in danger. Keep quiet, dearest," he whispered.

The next instant they heard the deep, suppressed laughter of some one. Both were confounded. Wonder for a moment held them silent, then, as Kingman looked up he saw a form standing in the entrance.

"Frighten you any?" asked the well-known voice of Abe Moffat.

"Rather," laughed Kingman. "Have you got my rifle?"

"I picked one up that was leaning against a tree here."

"How did you get it without my knowing it?"

"Just reached over and hauled it up without saying a word. You needn't blush so, Irene; I didn't hear George ask you to be his bonny wife; I didn't hear you promise him you would; but, George, if you value your little angel, you'd better get out of this as soon as convenient."

"What mean you?" asked both, eagerly.

"O nothing! only the devil is to pay among the Shawnees again."

"How did you know we were here?"

"I seen you go, and I can tell you, as I just now told you, you must do this courting at home, or in some safer place than this."

Kingman concluded that the advice of the ranger was good, and arose at once.

Whether the storm of war would not have reached our settlement or not it is difficult to tell. But the smouldering fire among the frontier was fanned into a raging flame by the perpetration of one of the greatest outrages that ever disgraced the American history. In March, 1783, Colonel Daniel Williamson and his command inhumanly massacred over a hundred of the peaceful Moravian Indians. These had long been such warm friends to the whites that they had incurred the displeasure of their own people thereby, and their murder was therefore entirely unprovoked and without the shadow of excuse.

Colonel Williamson sowed the wind and others reaped the whirlwind.

CHAPTER XIII.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

A few days subsequent to the massacre of the Moravian Indians, Abe Mossat made his appearance at the village, and reported their slaughter. For days nothing else was referred to, and the minister, Edwards, was so heartbroken that he started at once and alone through the wilderness to satisfy himself of the full extent of horrors.

The distance to the scene of the massacre was great, and it was a week's journey to go and return; but an impetus, such as seldom influence the motives of any one, impelled him forward. He arrived upon the ground late at night. With a silent and cautious tread the divine emerged from the forest and walked through the stricken village.

There was a faint moon overhead that threw a ghastly light upon the scene, and the ripple of the muddy Tuscarora, as it flowed darkly by, was the only sound that disturbed the solemn stillness. At first, and unconsciously to himself, he came upon the edge of the pit containing the slaughtered bodies. At sight of the patriotic Indians, piled promiscuously together, and rendered doubly woful by the moonlight streaming down upon them, a sudden faintness overcame him, and ere he could withdraw, he fainted and swooned away.

He recovered in a few moments, and without trusting himself to look again, turned and disappeared in the forest.

Late at night he started a fire against the dark trunk of a huge oak, and lay down to rest.

The divine generally slept heavily; but the terrible sight which he had so lately witnessed still haunted him in his dreams. He was feverish, and often uttered words that showed upon what his mind was constantly running. After a while he commenced dreaming. He saw the whole

butchery again, as his terribly excited imagination conceived it, and finally it seemed that one of the Indians suddenly sprang up and brandished a tomahawk over his head. He possessed no power of moving, and finally awoke, covered with cold and perspiration. As he started up he found a portion of his dream a reality. In the dim moonlight the glowing eyeballs and gleaming visage of an Indian were visible close to his face.

"Why, Wingenund, is that you? What is the matter that you look so?"

This Wingenund was a Shawnee chief who was known and respected by many of the whites for the sterling qualities he possessed. He was brave, honorable, and—what was almost a paradox in a Shawnee—was merciful. He had taken little part, in the frontier wars, although, in the battles with other Indian tribes, he was the bravest among the brave. He was a middle-aged man, of much intelligence, and often visited the different settlements. He spoke the English language very fluently, and avoided that extravagant manner of expression so common among the North American Indians. Hence, the astonishment of Edwards was natural at seeing him in such a suspicious attitude.

"What is the matter, Wingenund? You would not take my life, would you?"

"I did not know you, good man, and came near doing it. But Wingenund will never harm you."

"Nor any other white man, I hope."

"Wingenund has dug up the hatchet, and it shall never be buried again until it has drank the blood of the cowardly white men."

"What does this mean, good friend? I thought you were our friend."

"I was, good man, but am no longer."

"Not the friend of our settlement?"

"I am the friend of no man in whom a drop of pale-faced blood runs, except of Simon Girty and his men."

"Are you not a friend to me, good Wingenund?"

"If we meet in battle, there is nothing but enmity between us."

"I am sorry for that, but I trust we shall never meet thus. But, Wingenund, let me ask the meaning of this change, although I fear I know the reason already."

"Have you been yonder?" asked the savage, pointing his hand back of him.

"I have only just returned," replied the divine.

"You have seen the Moravian Indians?"

"I have seen them, Wingenund."

"And yet you ask why I have dug up the hatchet!"

"But, remember, Wingenund, that none of us undertake to justify the cause of Williamson, and why should you seek to take vengeance upon the innocent?"

The chieftain's brow grew darker still as he replied:

"It cannot do, good man; the tribes who have fought each other will unite together to make war upon you. I have passed through the villages and stirred them up. I told them what Williamson and his men had done, and that was enough. You must beware now."

"Wingenund, I know you are a brave man, and do not believe you would harm any one whom you believed to be a friend. Listen, then, to what I say. We heard, some months ago, that Colonel Williamson, with one hundred men, was preparing to march against the Shawnees. The Shawnees had broken in upon their settlements at night, had burned their houses and scalped their women and children. They did this without provocation upon the part of the whites, and we knew they would do it again. To prevent this, these men were sent to chastise the offenders. They were not sent to murder defenceless people, as they did. One of our men joined them. He accompanied them to the Moravian towns, not dreaming of their intentions. When he saw the awful work they were about to commence, he told Colonel Williamson to his face that he was a base coward and villain to undertake it. He appealed to the men to join him in their resistance, running the risk of being shot himself while he did so. Nearly a score besought their commander to spare tho

lives of the Indians, and boldly stepped forward and demanded that it should be done. But the others refused. They were determined that all in their power should die, and those who first spoke against it, finally joined the others. But he from our settlement did not. He did what he could to prevent it, but could not. But he took no part in it. He was their friend, and felt as all but these men did. When this man arrived, and reported that he had seen these things, I could not believe him at first. I hastened here alone to satisfy myself of what I saw. I have told you how we feel, and, Wingenund, will you raise the hatchet against us?"

The chief trembled at this question, and Edwards saw that he was deeply affected. He remained silent a moment, and then answered:

"The good man has spoken truth. The other Shawnees and Indians may slay your people, but Wingenund never will."

"That rejoices my heart, my good friend."

"But I warn you," he added, impetuously, as he receded a step—"I warn you, good man, of what is coming, that you may be prepared. The red men have gathered like the stars in heaven, and they have sharpened their knives and sung the war-song around the camp fires. Woe to him who crosses into the country! He shall never return. Our scouts are scouring the woods, and none shall escape their eyes. Be warned, good man, Wingenund has spoken."

Before Edwards could intercept the chieftain or make a reply, he wheeled around and darted away into the darkness.

The minister replenished his fire, and although he knew that the warnings of his savage friend should be heeded, he did not hesitate to lie down again in slumber. This time he was not disturbed, and when he awoke the sun was shining high in the sky, and the songsters of the wood were chattering gaily overhead. Slinging his rifle over his shoulder, he turned his face toward home.

The savages had comparatively little success along the

frontier. The different settlements were so thoroughly armed and prepared, and the rangers so watchful and vigilant, that it was impossible to come upon them unprepared. Stragglers and hunters underwent the most danger, as they were followed and attacked by superior numbers in the woods, and rarely escaped their implacable foes. The great Tecumseh at this time was but a mere boy, yet the valiant deeds of his companions fired his soul, and he gave evidence even at this early day, of that wonderful prowess and courage which has since rendered his name immortal.

The Indians, growing bolder and more exasperated at their ill-success, finally crossed the frontier and attacked the settlers in Western Pennsylvania and Virginia. Several houses were burned, and their inmates either put to the torture or carried away into captivity. This was a bold proceeding, and demanded punishment immediately. A call was made for volunteers, and the incensed settlers collected together at once. Nearly five hundred men enrolled themselves for the campaign, and to show the feeling which actuated the settlers, we have only to mention that the monster, Williamson, was elected leader; and he made no secret of his intention to murder the remaining Moravian Indians. This created so much indignation among the men and subordinate officers that Col. Crawford, a brave and humane man, was appointed to the command, with power to control the actions of the entire force.

On account of the unexpected change in the aspect of affairs along the frontier, Irene had informed Kingman that she considered it best to defer their marriage day until there was peace, or at least, a nearer approach to it than at present. In the midst of war, when their own people were engaged in it, it seemed hardly proper their a marriage should take place. Kingman saw the justice of what she said, and agreed that an indefinite postponement was demanded.

On the 22nd of May, a glorious spring morning, Colonel Crawford marched with his force into the Indian country.

The first point visited was the Moravian towns, which they found deserted and forsaken. Here Abe Moffat, who had joined the company as spy, notified Crawford that their motions were watched by numerous Indian spies, and that every preparation was made to give them battle. The greatest care was necessary to avoid being drawn into ambush, and Crawford ordered the men to march slowly, keeping a good distance behind the rangers and scouts. There were nearly a dozen of these constantly outlying the army, who communicated at all times with it. As there was a score of Indian spies, most consummate tact and cunning was called into play for the two forces to avoid each other. As it was, personal encounters took place between the scouts, and the soldiers often heard the report of their arms or the yells of conflict. The Indian spies concealed themselves in the thick tops of the trees, and as this was practiced by numbers of the white rangers, it more than once happened that an Indian or American spy found themselves both inhabitants of the same tree. In such a case a short contest, always fatal to one and often to both, took place.

In this manner the American party marched forward, until at Upper Sandusky they found themselves compelled to give battle to an overwhelming force of Indians. The rangers warned Crawford that it would be a desperate and bloody struggle, as the savages were exasperated to the high pitch of fury by the slaughter of the Moravian Indians, and they had learned that Colonel Williamson was with him.

Crawford formed his men in order of battle as quickly as possible, addressing them, and awaking an enthusiasm which gave him great confidence. The battle commenced immediately, Crawford's force preserving admirable order, and withstanding nobly the charge of the savages. But at the next charge Crawford saw, with inexpressible disgust, the cowardly Williamson (who feared the Indians were endeavoring to secure him) turned in with the utmost confusion and make a break for the woods. Crawford, in a voice of thunder, sprang forward and endeavor-

ored to check the retreat ; but it was impossible. A panic had taken possession of them, and the exulting Indians gave them no chance or opportunity to reform.

Simon Girty took part in this memorable conflict, and during the retreat dashed into the woods took prisoner—Abe Moffat ! This he would never have accomplished had Abe not labored under the greatest disadvantages. He had broken the lock of his rifle so as to be unable to fire it, and was singled out by Girty, who being mounted ran him down before he had the slightest chance of concealing himself. Giving him in charge of several Indians, Girty again took to the woods and captured two more whites. Upon arranging them, it was found that there were over forty. Among these was Colonel Crawford himself. A council was immediately held, and the whole were painted black, and condemned to the stake !

We shall dwell upon the fate of but two of these—Colonel Crawford and Abe Moffat.

At the village resided the Indian chief, Wingenund. This chief had been known to Crawford sometime before, and had been on terms of true friendship with him, and kindly entertained by him at his own house ; and such act of kindness, all red men remember with gratitude. Wingenund does not appear to have been present when the preparations were made for burning of the prisoners, but resided not far from the village and had retired to his cabin that he might not see the sentence of his nation executed upon one calling him his friend ; but Crawford requested that he might be sent for, cheering his almost rayless mind with the faint hope that he would interfere and save him. Accordingly Wingenund soon appeared in the presence of the bound and naked men white man.

He was asked by Crawford whether he know him, when the Indian said he believed he did, and then asked :

“ Are you not Colonel Crawford ? ”

“ I am,” replied the colonel.

The chief displayed much agitation and embarrassment.

“ Do you not recollect the friendship that always existed between us ? ” said Crawford.

"Yes," said the chief, "I remember that you have been kind to me and we have often drank together."

"I hope the same friendship continues," said Crawford.

"It would, of course, were you where you ought to be."

"And why not here?" urged the colonel. "I hope you would not desert a friend in time of need. Now is the time for you to exert yourself in my behalf, as I shou'd do for you were you in my place."

"I cannot. The King of England himself, were he to come to this spot, with all his wealth and influence, could not interfere. The blood of the innocent Moravians, more than half of them women and children, cruelly and wantonly murdered, calls too loudly for revenge!"

"My fate, then, is fixed," said the wretched man, "I must prepare to meet death in its worst form."

Wingenund, shedding tears, and deeply affected, then withdrew.

The colonel, observing terrible preparations going forward, called to Girty, who sat on horseback, and asked if the Indians were going to burn him. Girty replied in the affirmative. The colonel heard the intelligence with firmness, merely remarking that he would bear it with fortitude. At this juncture a Delaware chieftain arose and addressed the crowd in a tone of great energy, pointing frequently to the colonel. As soon as he had ended, a loud whoop burst from the assembled throng, and they all rushed at once upon the unfortunate Crawford.

A terrible scene of torture was now commenced. The warriors shot charges of powder into his naked body, commencing at the calves of his legs, and continuing to his neck. The boys snatched the burning hickory poles, and applied them to his flesh.

The squaws would take up a quantity of coals and hot ashes, and throw them upon his body, so that in a few moments he had nothing but fire to walk upon!

While this awful scene was being enacted, Girty rode up to the spot where Dr. Knight stood. After contemplating the sufferings of the colonel for a few moments, Girty told the doctor that he had a foretaste of what was

in reserve for him. He swore that he need not expect to escape death, but should suffer it in all the extremity of torture.

The terrible scene had now lasted more than two hours, and Crawford had become much exhausted. At length he sunk in a fainting fit upon his face, and lay motionless. Instantly an Indian sprung upon his back, knelt lightly on one knee, made a circular incision with his knife upon the crown of his head, and clapping the knife between his teeth, tore the scalp off with both hands.

Scarcely had this been done when a withered bag approached with a board full of burning embers, and poured them upon the crown of his head, now laid bare to the bone. The colonel groaned deeply, arose, and again walked slowly around the stake. But why continue a description so horrible?

Nature at length could endure no more, and at a late hour in the night he was released by death from the hands of his tormentors.

When Colonel Crawford was stripped and painted black for the stake, his shoes were also taken off and cast away.

Moffat stood by when this was done, and the action seemed to have given him a thought, for he kicked off his own moccasins, and walking forward to where the shoes lay, he managed to work his feet into them.

Of course his actions were observed by the Indians, but they supposed that nothing was intended by it further than to secure a protection for his feet.

When Crawford, in his torture, was compe'led to walk barefooted over the living coals, Girty turned upon his horse and spoke to Moffat:

"Ah, that's what you put on them shoes of his'n for, is it? Never mind--when we come to toast you, they won't do you no good."

One or two more of the prisoners were burned upon the spot, when it was determined to march the others to the Shawnee towns, where hundreds of others might feast themselves with the sight. For this purpose the pris-

ners were separated, and under the guardianship of either one or two Indians, marched off singly into the wood.

Dr. Knight, the companion of Crawford, as said before, was given in charge of one warrior, from whom he managed to escape in the wood during the march. The others, who had any appearance of stubbornness, or who seemed likely to give trouble, were given over to well-armed savages to watch their motions.

Such was the case with Moffat.

The Shawnee towns were a long distance away, and, as the prisoners were compelled to keep separate by their masters, the march required considerable time.

Moffat was the very last one who started. He rejoiced at this, as it left the coast clear behind him, and Girty had accompanied those in front.

The ranger could see, from the looks the two savages gave him, that they were anxious to ascertain his feelings. If his eye sparkled, or he retained his usual vivacity, their suspicions would be aroused; and he accordingly feigned the deepest despondency and despair.

During the day, Moffat's hands had been simply tied behind him, and he marched in front of the two savages. At night, he well knew he should be more securely bound, and it was his determination to elude his enemies, if possible, before that time.

In the afternoon he feigned sickness, beseeching the savages to halt and rest at short intervals. Although hungry, he refused all food, and on one or two occasions actually dropped to the ground, as if with faintness.

The suspicions of the Indians were naturally roused at first, but the sickness of their captive was so well assumed and carried out, that they were finally deceived. They halted several times, and allowed him a few moment's rest. As Moffat lay upon the ground, at such times he groaned and rolled and writhed as though in great pain; but, in reality, he was working at the thong which held his wrists. By doubling his foot beneath him, catching it and twisting the thong over the shoe, he succeeded in getting it in such a positon as to allow him to chafe and rub it against the nails in the shoe. Now, it is no easy matter for a person to bring his foot and hand together behind him and keep them in that position for any length of time; and if one is disposed to doubt it, they can easily satisfy themselves by a trial. But with the little, muscular ranger it was quite an easy matter. His great hope was to

chafe the ligature until it could be broken by a desperate tug. In this he was more successful; for, as he lay upon the ground, rolling and writhing as usual, he felt the cord part behind him, and his hands were free. In a moment he arose, of course keeping them behind him, and the string in its position as much as it was possible for him to do so.

From the manner of the savages, it was evident they suspected nothing.

Abe, however, rather overdid the matter at first. He became so faint, and sank to the ground so often, that the savages began to get out of patience. They ordered him to his feet several times, and once, when he did not rise soon enough, he was brought up all standing by a rousing kick. This did not suit him very well; but under the circumstances he concluded to pocket the insult, for the good reason that there was no other course for him to pursue.

At last darkness commenced settling over the forest. The savages were anxious to reach some point ahead, and as their frequent halts for their prisoner had delayed them, they now hurried forward and traveled later than they otherwise would. One savage, as stated, walked in front of Moffat, and the other behind.

As they were walking in a part of the forest darker and denser than usual, Moffat suddenly wheeled upon his feet, and before the hindmost savage could suspect his intention, struck him a stunning blow that felled him like a death-stroke. As he darted away the rifle of the other Indian was discharged and he started in pursuit. But he was out of sight, and in the forest—that is all a Western ranger asks. The whole night was before him, and he would have every opportunity that he wished.

He had run but a few rods when he settled down to a walk, for he felt that his escape was effected. The settlement was reached in due time, where he was gladly received by his friends. His escape may be considered one of the most remarkable that he had yet met with.

CHAPTER XIV.

When Abe Moffat reached the settlement, he heard startling news indeed. Irene Stuart, while wandering a

short distance from the stockade the afternoon before, had been heard to utter a piercing shriek, and when the minister, Edwards, who was the nearest, ran toward the spot, he saw her in the hands of a brawny, painted savage, who, carrying her as he would have carried an infant, dashed into the woods, and immediately disappeared.

This bold abduction, as a matter of course, created the greatest excitement. Several started at once in pursuit; but it being near dusk, they were unable to follow the trail, and they shortly returned without having gained a glimpse of the captor or captive. It happened that at this time Lewis Wetzel, the renowned ranger, was at the settlement, and he and the leading men at once met together for consultation. Kingman, naturally enough, was anxious to begin the pursuit instantly.

"No use," said Wetzel; "we can't help getting off the track, and then we shall lose all the time it'll take us to come back and start agin."

"But will they pause to camp to night—for there must be other Indians in the vicinity—and will we come up to them right away in the morning?" asked the excited lover.

"I hardly think we shall. They will hurry, of course, all they can, for they know well enough they will be pursued, and we'll have to travel pretty fast if we get sight of them before they are safe home aga n."

"The plan, then, is decided," said Edwards. "Wetzel and Kingman, here, will start at daylight, in pursuit, while, from the necessity of the case, we are compelled to remain at home. May God be with them!"

This moment there was a movement at the door, and as they parted, Abe Moffat entered. Several grasped his hand, and he asked :

"What's the row? No trouble, I hope, this time?"

"Trouble enough," replied Kingman, and he gave, in a few words, the particulars of what is already known to the reader.

"And I have bad news, too, for you," said Abe. "Colonel Crawford's force was defeated more completely than was Sanford's. Over one hundred have been killed, and more than thirty burnt at the stake! I seen Colonel Crawford burnt myself! I was painted black for the stake, but the Lord helped me to get away, and I'm down here, ready for any service."

The effect of this intelligence can scarcely be imagined.

"I'm good for a two week's tramp, and I ask it as a special favor, Wetzel, that you let me take your place."

"I've a great notion to foller that girl, and I don't see how Abe can do much, as he must be about used up now."

"Why not both of you go?" queried Stuart.

Both Wetzel and Abe shook their heads.

"It won't do," replied the former. "There mustn't be over two in pur-suit. Just as sure as there are, they won't do nothing. No, sir—it won't do."

"Two is just the number that is needed," added Abe.

"You can go, Abe," said Wetzel, after a moment's reflection. "It hurts my feelings to back out, but I don't believe you would ask to go unless there was some good idee in your head. If you can draw a sight on that Pete Johnson, just make it your special duty to wipe him out from the face of the universe!"

It was agreed by Moffat that he would rise at the earliest sign of morn, awake Kingman, and the two pass noiselessly out into the forest without disturbing the others. Each was provided with a rifle, some thirty charges of powder, and a piece of jerked venison sufficient to last them several days.

At a late hour the men departed from Edward's house to their homes.

As the night settled over the village, it was still and motionless, as though all were wrapped in the profoundest slumber. Not a soul was moving save the few sentinels, conversing together and exchanging their places at long intervals.

Hour after hour wore slowly away, and for the twelfth time Kingman returned, fretful and impatient, to his corner, as the light of day had not yet illumined the east. He sat a moment, when he heard Moffat move.

"Hallo! anybody about?" called out the latter.

"Yes, yes, I'm here! Do wake up, for your sleep seems eternal."

"Fudge! Now don't be in a hurry," replied Moffat, kicking his blanket off from him. "Just take a peep at the door to see if there's any light."

"No, there is not a streak of day. I looked only this minute."

"Look again. I'll bet my rifle against your life you will see it this time."

Kingman stepped to the door, and again looked forth. Sure enough, just over the eastern edge of the wilderness a

gray, misty light was visible, and there was no mistaking its cause.

"Day is at hand, indeed!" exclaimed he, joyously. "Let us be off at once."

"Not too fast, for there must be considerable more light before we start."

The two men made noiseless but careful preparations for their journey. A burning pine knot afforded them a bright, though oily and smoky light. Their hunting shirts were buckled tightly beneath their girdles, from each of which protruded the handles of a couple of knives; their moccasins secured, and their rifles examined most minutely; and as Moffat looked around and saw that nothing else was wanting he blew out the light and the two men stepped forth into the open air. No one was yet visible stirring in the settlement, and they made their way cautiously toward the northern and largest block-house. It was yet so early and dark that there was no necessity of starting for a half hour yet. As they reached the block-house Kingman was surprised to find a considerable number of their friends already there. Among them he noticed Captain Parks, Whetzel, Stuart, Prentice, and several others.

"Rather 'arly, ain't you?" remarked Whetzel.

"Yes; we will wait here a while before we start. Lew, do you suppose it is the Shawnees who have carried her off, or some other tribe?"

"I guess it's the Shawnees. They're generally in all kinds of deviltry, and that Pete Johnson, I believe, figures among them."

"He is as often in the other tribes, so that you can hardly tell anything by that. She's in desperate hands, I can tell you," added Moffat, in a lower tone.

"I know that, and you have a hard job before you, Abe."

"Umph!" remarked the captain; "If you can only rid the country of that Pete Johnson, you will be immortalized. Do it, and I'll never kick you again—I won't, upon my honor."

"Then I think I will do it," laughed the ranger.

"Isn't it time to be moving?" asked Kingman, anxiously.

"Yes; it's getting light, and we might as well start."

"George," said Stuart, as he took our heroes hand, and the tears streamed down his face, "be careful, and do your

utmost, for you know what there is at stake. She is yours forever if you can save her. God grant it."

All now bade our friends farewell, and they made their way cautiously out of the block-house. By this time the sun was just appearing above the edge of the forest, and they hurried forward upon their dangerous duty.

The trail was immediately taken, and pursued with the most unwearying assiduity. Kingman, whose border experience had toughened his sinews and strengthened his muscles, was unwilling to pause for more than a moment's rest. The great fear that his beloved was in the power of the renegade Johnson, was too tormenting to allow a moment's rest.

In a few hours they reached the spot where the fugitives had encamped. A brief examination revealed the gratifying fact that they were all comparatively a slight distance ahead, although there was no question but that they were proceeding quite rapidly.

With this was made a startling and dreaded discovery—a white man was one of the captors. Such being the case it could be no other than Johnson the renegade.

"Merciful heavens!" exclaimed Kingman, in agony. "We must soon overtake them or it will be too late."

"You're too excited," said Moffat, to whom the same question could be applied. "You're too excited. Take things coolly."

"But how can I? How much longer is that man to desolate the frontier?"

"I have an idea that he has run about the length of his rope. I somehow or other feel as though we were going to wipe him out."

"God grant it!" fervently exclaimed Kingman. "He has earned his death over and over again for the last dozen years."

An hour or two later Moffat announced that they were rapidly gaining upon the captors, and if they continued progressing as they were evidently doing at that time, the probabilities were that they would be overtaken by night-fall, or sooner.

It was only when the hunter insisted upon it that our hero would consent to stop and take a few mouthfuls of food.

There was a cool deliberation in the movements of Moffat that was strangely in contrast with the nervous restlessness of the lover. In fact they were just the men

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to engage in the enterprise. In the afternoon the trail showed signs of an increased gait upon those who were being pursued. This discovery gave Kingman increased anxiety. Finally the gathering darkness compelled them to give up the pursuit.

"Just what I expected!" exclaimed Kingman, in despair. "We may now as well yield up, and go home."

The ranger touched him on the shoulder, and pointed ahead.

"What does that mean?"

The glimmer of a camp-fire was discernible through the trees. That it was the camp-fire of those whom they were searching for, there could not be a moment's doubt.

"All now depends upon keeping cool," said the ranger. "We will steal up until we get a good view. You may take the Indian and I will take the renegade."

Side by side the two crawled cautiously forward. The Indian was preparing supper, while Pete John on was lying upon the ground, smoking a pipe. Irene sat on a fallen tree, her wrists bound together, and her head bowed as though she was giving away to her great woe.

Abe Moffat looked at Kingman, and whispered so that he was just able to hear him.

"Take your man, and be sure that you don't miss, or he may not miss me."

"All right; I will take the savage. Never fear for me."

Simultaneously the rifles came to their shoulders, and pointed like the finger of fate toward the doomed ones. Simultaneously their sharp crack broke upon the stillness, and at the same instant the two victims fell forward upon their faces, dead.

Irene Stuart was still gazing in wonder for the explanation of this, when her lover came rushing toward her, and the next moment she was enfolded in his arms.

Abe Moffat scratched his head until they were through, and then suggested that they take the back trail. This they did until they were far removed from the dead bodies, when, as all three were thoroughly exhausted, they halted for the night.

Bright and early, after a refreshing breakfast, the homeward journey was resumed, and just as night set in they came in sight of the settlement. As they looked toward it Kingman said:

"As we are now safely back again, and our marriage has

been postponed several times, don't you think it is about time it was consummated?"

"You need wait no longer, dearest," said she, leaning on his arm: "you have been very good to submit to my whims thus far."

It was a genuine old-fashioned wedding, such as our grandmothers tell about. Fiddling, and dancing, and mirth, and cider, and apples, and jollification were the distinguishing features. All went as merry as a goodly number of marriage bells, and it was not until the "wee small hours ayant the twal" that the parties separated and went to their homes.

The death of Johnson the renegade, was a relief to all the settlements. His influence, beyond all question, had incited most of the massacres, and now that he was gone, there was some hope felt that peace might be reasonably looked for.

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I would I were a boy
again,
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